A Comprehensive Exposition of Selected Verses from the Supplication of Abu Hamza Thumali

Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Husayni Tihrani

Volume 2

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Allamah Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn
Husayni Tihrani

Translation and annotations: Allamah Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Muhsin Husayni Tihrani

Translator: Sean Arde

قالَ اللهُ عزَّوجلَّ: ما مِن شَيءٍ أتَرَدَّدُ فيهِ مثلَ تَرَدُّدی عندَ قبضِ روحِ المؤمنِ! يَكرَهُ المَوتَ و انا اكرَهُ مَساءَتَهُ!

Allah the Exalted said: There is nothing I consider with greater reluctance than taking the life of a believer, for he dislikes death, and I dislike grieving him. (al-'Amālī, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī , p. 414)

Arabic Letters Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	’	م	m
ب	b	ن	n
ت	t	و	w
ث	th	ه	h
ج	j	ي	y
ح	ḥ	ة	ah; at
خ	kh	ى	á
د	d		
ذ	dh	Long Vowels	
ر	r	ا	ā
ز	z	و	ū
س	s	ي	ī
ش	sh		
ص	ṣ	Short Vowels	
ض	ḍ	ـَ	a
ط	ṭ	ـُ	u
ظ	ẓ	ـِ	i
ع	‘		
غ	gh	Persian Letters	
ف	f	پ	P
ق	q	چ	Ch
ك	k	ژ	Zh
ل	l	گ	G

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Session Eleven

Reasons for Fatigue and Lack of Attention in Worship

أعوذُ بِاللهِ مِنَ الشَّيطانِ الرَّجيمِ
بِسمِ اللهِ الرَّحمٰنِ الرَّحيمِ
و صلَّى اللهُ علىٰ محمَّدٍ و آلهِ الطَّاهرينَ
و لعنةُ اللهِ علىٰ أعدائهِم أجمَعينَ

اللهُمَّ احرُسنی بِحِراستِکَ، و احفَظنی بِحِفظِکَ، و اکلأنی بِکِلاءَتِکَ، و ارزُقنی حَجَّ بیتِکَ الحرامِ فی عامِنا هٰذا و فی کُلِّ عامٍ، و زیارةَ قبرِ نبیِّکَ و الأئمّةِ علیهِمُ السّلامُ، و لا تُخلِنی یا ربِّ من تِلکَ المَشاهِدِ الشّریفةِ و المَواقِفِ الکریمةِ!!

O Allah, protect me with Your protection, guard me with Your care, and shelter me with Your guardianship. Grant me the pilgrimage to Your Holy House this year and every year and the visitation of the tomb of Your Prophet and the Imams. Peace be upon them. Do not deprive me, O Lord, of those noble sanctuaries and honorable stations.

The meanings of *ḥifz*(حفظ), *ḥirāst* (حراست), and *kilā'at* (کلائت) are the same, with a slight difference.[2] *Ḥifz* means to safeguard or preserve something. It's often used in the context of protecting physical objects, such as a building or a treasure. *Ḥirāst* also means protecting or guarding something with a greater emphasis on people or ideas. For example, the government is responsible for *ḥirāst* (safeguarding) its citizens. *Kilā'at* means to represent or advocate for someone. It is often used in the legal context but can also be used in a more general sense. For example, a parent is their child's Kilā'at (advocate).

The concept of absolute synonymy, where two words share an identical meaning in all contexts, is a debated topic in Arabic linguistics. While انسان (Insān), بشر (bashar), and أدم (adam) all translate to "humanity," each term carries subtle connotations that distinguish it from the others. This nuanced meaning differentiation is a common feature in Arabic vocabulary, and some argue that there is a lack of true synonyms in the Arabic language. This emphasis on subtle meaning differences extends to other Arabic words, such as *ḥifz* (safeguarding), *ḥirāst* (guarding), and kilā'at (protection). Each term carries a specific shade of meaning that influences its usage in different contexts. In essence, synonymy in Arabic is more refined than simple one-to-one correspondence between words. Arabic vocabulary often prioritizes conveying specific connotations and contextual meaning over absolute equivalence.

اللهُمَّ احرُسنی بِحِراستِکَ.

O God, keep me in Your care, not in the care of others.

The Exalted God, You are my sole source of protection, for nothing else in the external world offers true security. If it is Your will to direct my thoughts elsewhere, You must present that alternative within my mind and make it my apparent protector. However, such a shift would inevitably introduce confusion and impurity to my thoughts. True clarity and well-being can only be found when my mind remains focused on You, unclouded by considering any other potential agency source. Therefore, I implore You to keep my thoughts perpetually turned towards You so that I may find refuge and security within Your presence regardless of my location in the external world. Grant me Your protection and the unshakeable assurance of Your safety.

The Strong Recommendation of Performing the Hajj Tamattu' Every Year for Those Who Are Able

و ارزُقنی حَجَّ بیتِکَ الحرامِ فی عامِنا هٰذا و فی کُلِّ عامٍ.

Grant me the opportunity to visit Your House and perform Hajj this year and every year.

The pilgrimage to the House of Allah is very important, as the Imam (peace be upon him) prayed in the previous passage.

و ارزُقنا حَجَّ بَيتِكَ و زِيارةَ قَبرِ نَبِيِّكَ!

And grant us the Hajj of Your House and the visitation of the grave of Your Prophet!

Here he again prayed:

و ارزُقنی حَجَّ بَيتِكَ الحَرامِ فی عامِنا هَذا و فی كُلِّ عامٍ.

Grant me the opportunity to perform Hajj to Your Holy House this year and every year!

Hajj is recommended annually for those with the necessary means (*Jidah*). A misunderstanding arose from a fatwa (religious ruling) by the late Shaykh Saduq (may he rest in peace). It appears someone misinterpreted "Jidah" as referring specifically to the residents of Jeddah, a Saudi Arabian port city. This led to the mistaken notion that Hajj is mandatory every year for the people of Jeddah, regardless of their financial situation or ability to travel.

Examples of Misinterpretations of Some Hadiths

Numerous documented misinterpretations of hadiths underscore the critical importance of accurate understanding and interpretation of these texts. Consider the following hadith:

الحَمّامُ يومٌ و يومٌ، لا يُكثِرُ اللَّحمَ.

(Al-hammamu yawmun wa yawmun, la yukthiru al-lahma).

Some interpretations mistakenly translate this as "going to the bathhouse every other day does not increase the body's flesh." However, a more accurate interpretation would be:

الحَمّامُ يومٌ و يومٌ لا، يُكثِرُ اللَّحمَ.[3]

(Al-hammamu yawmun wa yawmun laa, yukthiru al-lahma).

This translates to "Going to the bathhouse every day is not appropriate. Going to the bathhouse every other day will strengthen and grow the body's flesh."

The crux of the issue lies in the misplaced negation marker "لا" (la). In the incorrect interpretation, "لا" is attached to "يُكثِر" (yukthiru), resulting in "لا يكثر" (la yukthiru), which negates the meaning of "increase." The correct placement separates "لا" from "يوم" (yawmun), emphasizing that daily bathhouse visits are not advised, while every other day is beneficial.

This example highlights the prevalence of potential distortions and misinterpretations in hadith scholarship.

The Importance of Extreme Precision for Students in Understanding the Words of the Infallibles(peace be upon them)

Religious students are entrusted with the crucial task of meticulously interpreting the words of the Infallibles (peace be upon them). This responsibility necessitates a deep understanding of the nuances of language and the historical context in which these pronouncements were made. Just as rigorous attention to detail is fundamental in scientific research, a thorough understanding of the intended meaning behind the words of the Infallibles is equally crucial for religious students.

This principle is reflected in the common saying, "Teaching at the introductory level is often more challenging than teaching at the advanced level (*Dars al-Kharij*). This statement highlights the active engagement required in entry-level instruction.

The instructor utilizes a textbook, meticulously guiding students through each passage, line by line, ensuring comprehension and addressing any questions or ambiguities that may arise. In contrast, advanced instruction often involves lectures without readily available source materials. While this format promotes critical thinking and independent analysis, it risks overlooking crucial details or misinterpreting subtle distinctions.

The Unique Spiritual Significance of Visiting the Shrines of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them)

وَ زِيارَةَ قَبرِ نَبِيِّكَ وَ الأئمّةِ عليهِمُ السّلامُ.

In the supplication, the phrase "And the visitation of the grave of Your Prophet and the Imams (peace be upon them)" highlights the importance of visiting their holy shrines. Imam Sajjad's emphasis on this practice reinforces its significance as a spiritual act.

However, the question arises: what unique benefits and blessings are bestowed upon those who visit these sacred sites? While the specific nature of this spiritual phenomenon remains an unfathomable mystery, some insights can be offered.

While the spirits of the Prophet and the Imams (peace be upon them) are omnipresent, it is believed that a special focus or increased receptivity to visitors might reside at the physical location of their graves. These holy places offer a unique environment conducive to receiving blessings and experiencing a heightened spiritual connection.

These sacred shrines possess distinct spiritual surroundings that are absent elsewhere.[4] They are devoid of negative influences and are believed to be frequented by angels.[5] Consequently, entering them requires appropriate etiquette, including seeking permission and respectfully greeting the celestial beings present. It is crucial to understand that seeking permission signifies respect for the sacred space, not a literal request for authorization from individual angels stationed at specific locations.

Shaykh Baha'i says to Shah Abbas in his poem:

مقراض به احتیاطْ زن ای خادم
تَرسم بِبُری شهپر جبریل امین.[6]
Cut with caution, O servant,
I fear you will cut the wing of Gabriel the Trustworthy.

Shah Abbas, a revered historical figure in Iran, embarked on a remarkable pilgrimage from Isfahan to Mashhad, traveling for 28 days on foot. His dedication extended beyond the journey, as he actively contributed to the city upon arrival. His achievements included the establishment of a spacious courtyard and introducing a water system, significantly improving the city's infrastructure.

Beyond his leadership qualities, Shah Abbas displayed humility during his stay in Mashhad. He engaged in acts of service within the holy shrine, personally taking on the role of shoe keeper for the pilgrims on one occasion. Once, he assumed the responsibility of tending to the candles that illuminated the shrine, which involved using specialized scissors to trim the burnt wicks. The description of these scissors provides a unique historical glimpse. Notably, these large, round-headed implements are still preserved in the museum of Imam Ridha (peace be upon him). Their design, resembling a tin of Sohan Qom, ensured the safe collection of the trimmed wick remnants, preventing potential fire hazards.

That night, Shah Abbas himself took charge of cutting the wicks. He held the scissors from dusk till dawn as long as the candles were lit. Shaykh Baha'i was also in the shrine with the Shah. As Shah Abbas was cutting the wicks, Shaykh Baha'i spontaneously recited a quatrain in praise of Shah Abbas:

پیوسته بُود ملائک علّیین
پروانهٔ شمع روضهٔ خلد آیین
The angels of the high heavens are always
Moths of the candle of the heavenly garden.

He then addressed Shah Abbas directly:

مقراض به احتیاط زن ای خادم
ترسم بِبُری شهپر جبریل امین
Cut carefully, O servant!
I fear you will cut the wing of Gabriel, the Trustworthy.

While a metaphor, this poetic imagery underlines the sincere respect and reverence held for the shrine and the celestial beings associated with it.

O Allah, grant us the blessed opportunity to visit these holy shrines and draw spiritual sustenance from their sacred presence. Witnessing their transformative power is truly awe-inspiring, for they seem to revitalize the souls of those who enter. Just as a pristine river cleanses an individual of all physical impurities, so too does the experience of these sacred spaces cleanse the spirit.

The Obligation to Respect and Cherish the Holy Shrines and Noble Stations

و لا تُخلنی یا ربِّ من تلک المشاهد..

The supplication, "O Lord, do not deprive me of these holy shrines and noble stations!" emphasizes the significance of visiting these sacred places.

"*muqif*" (station) is an exceptionally blessed and rare opportunity. Visiting these shrines presents a unique occasion for spiritual renewal and divine favor. It is believed that within these sacred spaces, one can receive forgiveness for transgressions, be cleansed of impurities, and have one's prayers answered. Additionally, the presence of the Imam is believed to be particularly potent in these holy shrines, further enhancing the spiritual significance of the experience. Therefore, the supplication expresses a deep yearning to benefit from the blessings associated with these sacred spaces consistently. It highlights the importance of recognizing the exceptional nature of visiting these shrines and cherishing the opportunity to be present within them.

اللّهُمَّ تُب علَیَّ حتّی لا أعصیکَ.

O Allah, accept my repentance! Accept my repentance so that I will never disobey You again.

Repentance can be understood as returning to a better version of oneself. This return involves addressing past mistakes and achieving a personal transformation that makes future transgressions less likely. By actively working on self-improvement, individuals can transcend their past actions and reach a higher state of being. This state, characterized by positive growth, naturally diminishes the inclination towards negativity or wrongdoing. This is the essence of true personal transformation.

Therefore, O God, bring my return to You to such an extent that I am not only cleansed of the sins but also not successful in sinning again.[7]

و ألهِمنی الخیرَ و العمَلَ بِه..

O Allah, grant me continuous inspiration to recognize and pursue virtuous deeds! Show me the true essence of good and guide my thoughts and mind toward righteousness.

Despite a genuine desire to do good, I recognize that some individuals may lack the knowledge to define what constitutes true good. They may possess significant resources and a strong intention to use them for benevolence yet lack the necessary

wisdom. Perhaps they yearn to contribute in Your way, O Allah but are unsure of the most appropriate channels for such an act. Consequently, their efforts could be misdirected, potentially causing unintended harm. These individuals lack the guidance and knowledge to navigate the path of good effectively.

Therefore, I implore You, O Allah, to illuminate my understanding of what constitutes true good. Grant me the wisdom to discern it with clarity. Please empower me to act upon this understanding and translate this inspiration into concrete actions. May I not remain passive but actively engage in acts of goodness and fulfill Your will.

وَ خَشْيَتَكَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَ النَّهارِ ما أبْقَيْتَنى يا رَبَّ العالمين.

O Allah, grant me the steadfast ability to hold You in reverence and fear, both during the day and the night, for as long as You allow me to live! O Lord, in whose nurturing and powerful hands lie the creation and sustenance of all the heavens, the earth, and all that exists within them?

Here, the term "خشيت" (khashyat) signifies not merely fear but a sense of awe and reverence arising from a deep understanding of Your infinite power, majesty, and glory. It translates to standing with humility and awareness before Your station of Majesty, ensuring that I never, God forbid, forget Your incomparable greatness and majesty.

اللّهُمَّ إنّى [كُلَّما] قُلتُ قَد تَهَيَّأتُ و تَعَبَّأتُ و قُمتُ لِلصَّلاةِ بَينَ يَدَيكَ و ناجَيتُكَ، ألقَيتَ عَلَيَّ نُعاسًا إذا أنا صَلَّيتُ، و سَلَبتَنى مُناجاتَكَ إذا أنا ناجَيتُ.

O Allah, despite preparing diligently, gathering my focus, and standing before You in prayer and supplication, I often fall short. Drowsiness overcomes me during prayer, and I cannot fully immerse myself in the sweetness of communion with You during my supplications. What is the reason for this state that I encounter?

Even after thorough preparations for worship, such as cleansing myself through a bath, removing excess hair, performing ablution, wearing clean clothes, and applying perfume before visiting a holy shrine like the mausoleum of Ḥaḍrat ʿAbdulʿazīm or a mosque, I am sometimes overcome by lethargy and fatigue. It feels like a cold wind has sapped my strength, leaving me too weak to focus. Drowsiness takes hold during prayer, and the presence of mind required for meaningful supplication is lost. O Allah, why do I experience these states at times? What is the cause of deprivation and constriction during worship, especially when I intend to connect deeply with You?

اللّهُمَّ إنّى كُلَّما قُلتُ قَد تَهَيَّأتُ و تَعَبَّأتُ و قُمتُ لِلصَّلاةِ بَينَ يَدَيكَ و ناجَيتُكَ، ألقَيتَ عَلَيَّ نُعاسًا إذا أنا صَلَّيتُ، و سَلَبتَنى مُناجاتَكَ إذا أنا ناجَيتُ! ما لى كُلَّما قُلتُ قَد صَلُحَت سَريرَتى و قَرُبَ مِن مَجالِسِ التَوّابينَ مَجلِسى، عَرَضَت لى بَلِيَّةٌ أزالَت قَدَمى و حالَت بَينى و بَينَ خِدمَتِكَ؟! سَيِّدى، لَعَلَّكَ عَن بابِكَ طَرَدتَنى.

O Allah, why do I find myself in a state where, despite diligently striving to purify and refine myself through fasting, giving charity, and strengthening family ties, I am still confronted with obstacles that hinder my worship? These acts create a positive spiritual state and pave the way for a deeper connection with You.

With this improved state, I expect to feel a natural ease in turning to You, engaging in heartfelt supplications, and participating in gatherings of repentance and remembrance alongside others seeking Your forgiveness and mercy. My proximity to You, I believe, should naturally foster a better spiritual state within me. However, the reality often seems to contradict my expectations. Trials, tribulations, and unforeseen events frequently arise, derailing my progress and causing me to falter. These obstacles create a distance between me and Your service, hindering my efforts to worship You as I truly desire. Why do I face these challenges despite my sincere efforts to draw

closer to You? What is the wisdom behind these trials that test my resolve and seemingly impede my spiritual journey?

O Allah, I approach You sincerely to sit in Your presence, engage in acts of remembrance (*dhikr*), seek Your nearness through supplication (*tawassul*), and ponder deeply upon the wisdom in Your words. However, my efforts to connect with You are frequently disrupted by unforeseen distractions.

At times, a child falls ill, necessitating immediate attention. Urgent calls for necessities like bread or milk arise from the household. Accidents, like a child being cut by broken glass, demand immediate intervention. These and similar responsibilities, inherent to my role and life circumstances, pull me away from prayer and contemplation.

The doorbell rings, or perhaps the sweeper arrives to collect the trash. As I rise to fulfill these obligations, whether tending to my child, attending to household needs, or engaging in necessary brief conversations, the state of focused presence I had cultivated withers away. When I return to my prayer mat, I find my heart disconnected, the pathway to meaningful connection with You seemingly blocked.

O Allah, why do these disruptions occur when I strive for closeness to You? Is it not within Your power to delay them by an hour or half an hour, allowing me to complete my devotions before these immediate needs arise?

A Story from a Student of the Late Ayatollah Qazi

A friend in Najaf recounted the following story: The late Ayatollah Qazi instructed me to recite "qul huwa llāhu aḥad" one thousand times every night. He emphasized the immense importance of reciting "Innā 'Anzalnāhu" on the twenty-third night, the Night of Power.[8] He explained that the entire month of Ramadan serves as a preparation for this night, and one's spiritual state should be at its peak. We eagerly awaited this night, anticipating the "Innā 'Anzalnāhu" recitation and a profound spiritual experience. We hoped to witness, by God's grace, the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and everything between them.

However, on that very night, shortly after I went to the restroom, my ring, inscribed with either the Ayat al-Kursi or the names of the five Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), fell into the latrine. As it contained the name of God, retrieving it became an immediate necessity. This happened to be the twenty-third night of Ramadan!

Long story short, we called a plumber who dug up the pit and drained the water. Fortunately, the pits in Najaf then were not very deep, only around five or six meters. Nonetheless, we were occupied with this task until the morning call to prayer. As a result, we ended up reciting "Innā 'Anzalnāhu" while wearing the plumbers' clothes!

This experience led us to ponder why God places us in such situations at such inopportune moments. It seems truly perplexing! God seems to be very particular about timing!

A similar incident also happened for Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and his wife, Lady Fatima (peace be upon her). After enduring days of hunger, they finally acquired some barley or wheat. The children, overjoyed, grounded the grain and made flour. Just as they were about to take a bite of bread, a beggar knocked on their door and said, "O Ahl al-Bayt Rasul Allah"!

Why couldn't the beggar have come a little earlier or later? Yet, God sent him at that very moment. He is the sender, and He desires to test the extent of their patience. He sends him, for everything is within His control, and nothing happens beyond His knowledge.

Therefore, the Imam says, "You cast drowsiness upon me!" He clarifies that it's not laziness, sickness, back pain, or any other physical ailment. "You bring on this

drowsiness!" This hardship, a test in the truest sense, comes from You. But why at this specific time?

لَعَلَّکَ عَنْ بابِکَ طَرَدْتَنی.

Perhaps You have driven me away from Your door?

Imagine someone who dislikes meeting another individual. When the unwanted guest expresses their desire for a one-hour visit, the host, feeling obligated to meet, assigns them a task. They might say, 'Go to this location and complete this errand before returning.' This is their way of subtly avoiding an extended interaction.

O God, Now, I come before You, seeking an hour of heartfelt conversation and reflection through supplication. Yet, in my current state, I feel a sense of being turned away from Your presence. Could this be a reflection of a lack of sincerity in my intentions?

وَ عَنْ خِدْمَتِکَ نَحَّیْتَنی.

You are throwing me away from Your service and preventing me from serving You.

Naḥḥaytanī (نَحَّیْتَنی) from the verb *tanaḥḥī* (تَنَحّی) means to throw away, to expel, and to repel.[9] Is this the issue?

One of the reasons for disinterest in worship is belittling the right of God.

Or perhaps You saw me belittling Your right, so You distanced me.

أَوْ لَعَلَّکَ رَأَیْتَنی مُسْتَخِفّاً بِحَقِّکَ فَأَقْصَیْتَنی.

Mustakhif (مُسْتَخِف) means someone who belittles and trivializes Your right, O God, Your right is very great! I belittled Your right, so You threw me away!

God says: To approach me in supplication, you must first demonstrate reverence and acknowledge our vast difference. Recognize your place and my supreme authority. I am the Sovereign of Sovereigns, the Ruler of Rulers. By my hand, the heavens and the earth were created. I am the source of all prophecy and the sender of messengers. Without a proper understanding of these truths and adherence to the established protocols for prayer and supplication, your request diminishes the respect due to me.[10]

Fa'aqṣaytanī (فَأَقْصَیْتَنی) ; You threw me away! Is this the case?

أَوْ لَعَلَّکَ رَأَیْتَنی مُعْرِضاً عَنْکَ فَقَلَیْتَنی.

Or did you see that I turned away from You (God), so You perceived me as an enemy?

Similar to genuine love, where one devotes their full attention – both outwardly and inwardly – to building a close bond with the object of their affection, superficial engagement while adhering to outward formalities lacks genuine connection. In such instances, the mind remains preoccupied with personal desires, aspirations, and attachments, even when physically present with the object of true connection. This superficiality is ultimately unsustainable.

Has such a situation befallen me, where my inward focus has shifted away from the inherent value and true connection available? Has my internal orientation steered me from appreciating the significance and purpose, leaving me disconnected and lacking genuine connection?

فَقَلَیْتَنی.

Do hostility and enmity cause this feeling of estrangement? Did You do this to me in retaliation for my turning away from You? Is this the issue?

Another factor contributing to this disengagement is the absence of genuine honesty and integrity in both actions and words

أو لَعلّكَ وجدتَنی فی مقامِ الکاذِبینَ فرفَضتَنی.

Or perhaps you found me in the position of liars, so you rejected me.

God, The Exalted says: To truly connect with me in communion, prayer, or a deeper bond, one must build upon a foundation of truthfulness. Authenticity is key. This extends beyond outward actions to encompass the inner realm of thoughts and emotions.[11] Your approach must be characterized by complete sincerity.

Standing in a position of worship and reciting

إياك نعبد و إياك نستعين.[12]

سبحان ربی الاعلی و بحمده.

Merely assuming a posture of worship and reciting supplications like "We worship You alone and seek help from You alone" while harboring insincere intentions in one's heart is meaningless. Similarly, uttering phrases of praise like "Glory be to my Lord, the Most High, and praise be to Him" while harboring mockery or declarations of greatness like "God is the greatest" while inwardly denying it are all forms of falsehood. Such hypocrisy has no place in establishing a genuine connection with me. This is because forging a true connection with me requires uttering with sincerity: "O God, I love You with every fiber of my being, and I yearn to come closer to You!"

If, however, someone abandons their authentic self and approaches me solely through a facade of external piety, this outward display holds no value. Such superficial performances are for those who pretend to be pious and devout, engage in ostentatious displays of devotion, and constantly have their lips moving in prayer. Still, their hearts remain far removed from the essence of true connection.[13]

Junaid, a prominent figure, cautioned: Engaging solely in the act of remembrance can inadvertently lead to forgetting the essence of what is being remembered. He observed someone engaged in a repetitive practice. He commented, "While you are occupied with the act itself, you seem to have overlooked the underlying purpose".

إشتغلتَ بالذِکرِ عنِ المذکورِ.[14]

The intended purpose of such practices is to cultivate a mindful connection with the object of remembrance. It is not to become so engrossed in the act that the deeper significance is lost. This can be likened to someone who receives an egg, yet instead of consuming it for its potential nourishment, they solely focus on breaking it open and discarding the shell.

Have I fallen into an inconsistency where my actions contradict my expressed intentions? Have my claims proven to be superficial and lacking in authenticity?

Another contributing factor is ingratitude for blessings

أو لَعلّکَ رأیتَنی غیرَ شاکرٍ لِنَعمائِکَ فحرمتَنی.

Perhaps you found me lacking in appreciation for Your gifts and thus deprived me, for You have said:

لئن شكرتم لأزيدنكم ولئن كفرتم إن عذابي لشديد .

If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]. But if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe. (Quran, 14:7)

Expressing gratitude can be seen as fostering an appreciation for what one has, potentially leading to a sense of abundance and continued positive experiences. Conversely, ingratitude may lead to a sense of entitlement and a disregard for the value of what is possessed, potentially increasing the risk of loss.

This principle transcends our relationship with the divine and extends to all aspects of life. Demonstrating gratitude for the favors received encourages their continuance, while neglect of appreciation can lead to withdrawal. Humans are not irrational beings who would continue assisting someone who responds with ingratitude or indifference. The same principle holds in our interactions with others. When we show appreciation for their kindness and generosity, we encourage them to continue extending those qualities to us and others.

A lack of gratitude can ultimately be detrimental. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) states:

اَلمَغبُونُ لا مَحمودٌ و لا مَاجُورٌ.[15]

The ungrateful person receives neither praise nor reward.

Gratitude transcends a moral obligation by yielding tangible benefits. Recognizing and appreciating the positive elements of our lives cultivates a mindset conducive to continued success and positive experiences.

The Importance of Gratitude Towards Creation as Embodiments of Divine Names

In Imam Reza's teachings, expressing gratitude is integral to true piety. He emphasizes that failing to thank someone who does us a favor reflects a lack of appreciation for God's blessings.[16] This is because those who perform acts of kindness are, in essence, instruments of divine beneficence. When we receive a favor, we should recognize it as a channel through which God's grace flows. Disregarding this connection is considered a serious error with significant consequences.

Therefore, O God, I recognize that I have not fully appreciated the blessings you have bestowed upon me. A more grateful heart may have led to continuing or increasing these blessings.

A sincere "thank you" is just the beginning of expressing genuine gratitude. It's about acknowledging the thoughtfulness behind a generous act and demonstrating appreciation that reflects the value of the gift. For example, receiving a handcrafted, high-quality rug merits more than just verbal thanks. Taking good care of it and remembering the giver are equally important. Simply using a different object to perform the intended action (like using a different rug for prayer) wouldn't convey the same level of appreciation for the specific gesture of kindness.

Preserving and Strengthening Positive States: A Form of Gratitude

Entering a state of devotion and communion with the divine can lead to a profound sense of well-being. Preserving this state of solitude is crucial, as it is a form of gratitude for its existence.

True gratitude for a divine blessing extends beyond mere acknowledgment. If God provides water, our act of gratitude manifests in its conservation. Similarly, the gift of bread is best appreciated through careful preservation. Knowledge, too, is a blessing to be treasured. Our gratitude is demonstrated by sharing it with those who lack it while not denying access to the intelligent and capable.[17]

Following this logic, a positive state of being granted by God necessitates preservation as a form of gratitude. One should avoid actions that could disrupt this state, such as succumbing to arrogance and believing oneself above limitations. The thought, "I am in such a state that I can do anything I want!" can be detrimental. Engaging in harmful or reckless behavior risks losing this delicate and precious gift.

Upon a guest's arrival, it's essential to demonstrate hospitality by offering a warm welcome and ensuring their comfort. Providing a seat of distinction can be a thoughtful gesture. While offering rose water or burning incense may vary culturally, creating a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere is key. Conversely, a lack of attentiveness can negatively impact the guest's experience. Leaving them waiting at the door can lead to a premature departure. Patient guests might enter the home but leave shortly if neglected. Highly patient individuals might stay in the room but become disgruntled by a lack of acknowledgment.

Maintaining a positive attitude requires careful nurturing. It can be even more susceptible to negativity than one might expect. While a slight blemish on a mirror can be easily addressed, a negative thought can linger and cloud one's overall perspective. This is why it's important to proactively cultivate a positive mindset, like covering a mirror to prevent dust accumulation.

It's important to acknowledge and embrace the spiritual feelings that arise within us. If we ignore them, they will eventually dissipate. This act of acceptance is similar to how we cherish a valued experience.

These feelings, like honored guests, divine messengers, or good omens, deserve our attention and care. The phrases we use in prayer, such as "Your mercy has descended" and "Your goodness has descended," all refer to the arrival of a positive state. We aim to preserve, nurture, and welcome this state while avoiding anything that might disrupt it.

For example, to maintain a desired state, one might practice generosity. Additionally, they might cultivate focus and minimize involvement in worldly affairs while dedicating more attention to matters of the hereafter.

In short, the individual must understand the conditions supporting this state. Once identified, one can actively create environments conducive to growth and eliminate detrimental factors. By doing so, the state can become increasingly stable, persisting for days, weeks, or even months.

They say that travelers do not need to perform the full ritual. They are considered guests for thirty days and can perform a shortened version.[18] After thirty days, the guidance is to "complete it with ten".

وأتممناها بعشر.[19]

سحرگه ره روی در سرزمینی
همی‌گفت این معما با قرینی
که ای صوفی شراب آن گه شود صاف
که در شیشه بماند اربعینی.[20]

With dawn's first light, a traveler did stray,
A riddle shared upon their lonely way.
Oh, Sufi wise, they spoke with thoughtful tongue,
Wine's true clarity can only be sung,
When time refines it, held in a cool embrace,
For forty days within a resting place.

The initial thirty days serve as preparation, and the ten days are an extension, totaling forty days. Once forty days have passed, a sense of permanence is established. What has been achieved and maintained over this period becomes less likely to fade. One should then strive for a higher state, seeking personal growth and exploration. Therefore, when positive states arise within us, the advice is to "sustain them for forty days".

و الحالُ یزول و کلُّ حالٍ یزول

The present spiritual state and every spiritual state are fleeting.

The impermanent nature of these experiences explains their fleeting quality. Every emotional or spiritual state eventually transitions into another. However, consistently cultivating a positive state for forty days can transform it into an ingrained habit. This reduces the likelihood of it disappearing and fosters integration into one's character. Consequently, it becomes a lasting aspect of the self, persisting until the desired destination of personal growth is achieved.[21]

Lord! I am experiencing lethargy, drowsiness, and laziness. A lack of gratitude for the good things in my life may be contributing to this. Perhaps a shift in perspective, focusing on appreciating what I have, could lead to a renewed sense of energy and motivation.

While God's infinite mercy, generosity, and power as the giver of existence are undeniable truths, His blessings are not readily available to all. The more refined and valuable the gift, the greater the effort required to attain it, and the more discerning God becomes in bestowing it. The assumption that Prophets, saints, and Imams received their gifts effortlessly is a misconception. They endured immense hardship, shedding tears, offering fervent prayers, and experiencing profound spiritual struggle to reach those spiritual heights.

چل سال رنج و غصه کشیدیم و عاقبت
تدبیر ما به دست شراب دوساله بود.[22]

For forty years, we endured sorrow and decline,
And in the end, our solace came from two-year-old wine.

I have walked the path for forty years, diligently striving and yearning to find you! These constant trials and tribulations are no mere inconvenience! They might continue, saying: If attaining divine connection was as effortless as other endeavors and any self-proclaimed prophet were readily accepted, and everyone received the same profound states as prophets and messengers, then prophethood and sainthood would be commonplace! There would be nothing extraordinary about it.

أو لَعَلَّكَ فَقَدتَني مِن مَجالِسِ العُلَماءِ فَخَذَلتَني.

Lord, I confess to a failing in my dedication. I have not been as diligent as I should be in attending gatherings of the learned and seeking their wisdom. This neglect, I recognize, has surely diminished me in Your sight.

I recognize the value of attending these gatherings and seeking wisdom and guidance. By engaging with their ideas, methodologies, and traditions, I understand the importance of connecting with their spirit and learning from them. However, I acknowledge that my actions have not always reflected these ideals, and I take responsibility for neglecting this valuable opportunity for growth.

أو لَعَلَّكَ رَأَيتَني فِي الغافِلينَ فَمِن رَحمَتِكَ آيَستَني.

Perhaps you observed me associating with those who lack mindfulness, and out of your mercy, you despaired of me.

People become absorbed in business, commerce, agriculture, and industry, often prioritizing these pursuits so that higher moral principles and ethical conduct are neglected. However, these concepts are revisited in the mosque, where references to God and Allah Akbar are prevalent. Yet, this surface-level engagement is insufficient.

A genuine connection with these principles necessitates constant awareness, regardless of the context – whether in the marketplace, during business transactions, in moments of activity or rest, or during sleep or wakefulness. Every interaction requires mindfulness that the other person possesses the potential to embody these higher principles. Consequently, deceiving them is akin to deceiving those principles' essence.

For instance, if a customer unfamiliar with the pricing structure happens to be Christian, exploiting their lack of knowledge would be unethical by overcharging them based solely on their religious background. Similarly, if someone appears untrustworthy, it is wrong to take advantage of them for personal gain. Such behaviors exemplify a lack of attentiveness to these higher principles. When someone consistently engages in such patterns, they lose sight of these values and are no longer considered worthy of embodying them. This inevitably leads to accusations of hypocrisy, as they claim to uphold certain values while abandoning them in their daily conduct.

A hypocrite expresses devotion and goodwill to others while harboring ill will and speaking disparagingly of them behind their backs. This behavior is deeply troubling.[23]

فمن رحمتک آیستنی.

You found me among the heedless, O God, and You despaired me of Your mercy.

او لعلک رأیتنی آلف مجالس البطالین، فبینی و بینهم خلیتنی.

Or perhaps you saw me associating with those who waste their lives, so you left me to them.

Wasting one's life refers to spending days and nights in futile activities, such as gatherings filled with idle chatter, jesting, mockery, and laughter. Every group has individuals engaging in such unproductive behavior, which can easily consume valuable time.

Divine Providence, You have observed my tendency to seek solace in outward connections. I have neglected the inward journey of self-reflection and communion with You, relegating these practices to infrequent moments. Despite this discrepancy, you are fully aware of it. We, as humans, often proclaim unwavering devotion and a constant awareness of Your presence. Yet, our actions paint a different picture, as we readily associate with those whose pursuits lack purpose. How can one make such claims before You, the source of all knowledge, who sees through every facade and hidden motive?

وقل اعملوا فسیری الله عملکم ورسوله والمؤمنون.[24]

Proclaim: 'Act, for God will observe your deeds, as will His Messenger and the believers. [You will be brought back to the One who knows the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you of what you have done].

Then, as a result, "You left me to them; You abandoned me with those who waste their lives".

بینی و بینهم خلیتنی.

You have left me to deal with them.

A mighty voice inquires: Do you find solace in the company of those who squander their potential? Do their pursuits hold any allure for you? Have you become enthralled by fleeting thoughts and illusions that offer no sustenance to your spirit, mind, or body? Have you succumbed to a state of utter indifference?

O Divine Source, have you cast me aside to dwell amongst those who waste their days? Have you turned your back on me, declaring, 'Seek out those who squander their lives, for you are no longer welcome here! You have chosen their path, so you shall not find solace in mine! You have joined the ranks of the heedless and thus have no place amongst the enlightened! You have abandoned the gatherings of wisdom and, therefore, have forfeited your place here!'[25]

أو لعلّكَ لم تُحِبَّ أن تَسمَعَ دُعائي فباعَدتَني.

Or perhaps You do not wish to hear my prayers, so You have distanced me.

Have I become so wicked and disobedient that You no longer want to hear my voice?

It is like someone deeply hurt by another person's words. Even kind and gentle words from the person who caused the pain may now evoke disgust or repulsion.

O God, have my actions caused such a feeling in you that you no longer wish to hear my prayers or words? As soon as I try to commune with you, do you push me away so I can no longer speak to you?

أو لعلّكَ بِجُرمي و جَريرَتي كافَيتَني.

Or perhaps you have punished me for my sins and transgressions.

You are preventing me from experiencing this state as punishment for my crimes. I commit sins during the day, and now, you punish me when I come to you!

أو لعلّكَ بِقِلّةِ حَيائي مِنكَ جازَيتَني.

Or perhaps you have punished me for my lack of modesty before you.

The Lord instructs us to act with decorum. Immodesty and disrespect are unbecoming of those who enter His presence. The house of the Lord demands reverence.

اَللّهُمَّ صلِّ عَلى محمّدٍ و آلِ محمّدٍ.

O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.

Session Twelve

Divine Forgiveness and the Extent of God's Mercy

أعوذ بالله من الشّيطان الرّجيم
بسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم
و صلّى الله على محمّدٍ و آله الطّاهرين
و لعنةُ الله على أعدائهم أجمعين

I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan.
In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
May Allah's peace and blessings be upon Muhammad and his pure family.
And may Allah's curse be upon all their enemies.

فإنْ عفَوتَ يا ربِّ فطالَ ما عفَوتَ عن المُذنبين قبلی! لأنّ كرمَک أیْ ربِّ یجلّ عن مُكافاةِ المقصّرین؛ و أنا عائذٌ بفضلک، هاربٌ منکَ إلیک، مُتنجِّزٌ ما وعدتَ من الصّفح عمّن أحسنَ بکَ ظنّاً!

O Lord, if you forgive, you have forgiven many sinners before me! Your generosity is too great to punish those who fall short. I take refuge in Your grace, fleeing from You to You, trusting in Your promise to forgive those who think well of you!

The Cause of Boredom and Laziness in Prayer and How to Overcome It

In discussing potential doubts that can arise during prayer, leading to boredom and sluggishness, the Imam emphasizes the importance of actively dispelling these doubts for those seeking a deeper connection with God. He explains that each doubt, as it arises, can hinder one's focus and devotion during prayer and supplication. Therefore, by proactively removing these doubts, as outlined by the Imam, one can achieve the desired state of focus and tranquility during prayer.

The forgiveness of our sins is not new to God

Then he says:

فإن عفَوتَ یا ربِّ فطالَ ما عفَوتَ عن المُذنبینَ قبلی.

Granting forgiveness is not new to you, Lord. Many sinners have received your grace before me.

As I reflect upon my faults and transgressions, I recognize how they may have caused me to experience a lack of focus and engagement during prayer. This has led to a sense of distance from the path of repentance. Additionally, these shortcomings may have contributed to drowsiness during supplication, hindering my efforts to achieve the state of devotion I yearn for.

If, in your infinite mercy, you grant me forgiveness and overlook these contributing factors, I acknowledge, O God, that such forgiveness is not a burden upon you.

The Removal of Bad States through the Forgiveness of Sins

فطالَ ما عفَوتَ عن المُذنبینَ قبلی.

You have forgiven many sinners before me.

Considering your history of forgiveness and overlooking past transgressions, extending that same grace to this current state (boredom) would be akin to removing the obstacle it presents. This, in turn, would allow the return of the previously experienced positive state during prayer.

Forgiveness means removing these distractions and restoring a focused prayer state. This act of forgiveness wouldn't be unprecedented, as your generosity has extended to countless others who have committed similar transgressions.

The Greatness of God's Generosity

لأنَّ كَرَمَكَ أیْ رَبِّ یَجِلُّ عَنْ مُکافاةِ الْمُقَصِّرِینَ.

O Lord, Your forgiving nature is commendable for those who fall short. You do not punish them because Your actions do not constitute a measured response to their actions.

Your inherent greatness transcends that of any sinner, and your actions far exceed any human deed. Therefore, you never diminish yourself by interacting with your servants, nor do you equate them to yourself. How, then, could your actions be considered comparable to theirs? If a sinner commits a transgression and you were to impose a strictly equivalent punishment, your actions would be deemed on the same level as theirs, implying a limitation in your power and wisdom. However, this is not the case. Just as your essence surpasses the potential and actual self of the sinner, so do your actions transcend any human limitations.

The Meaning of Fleeing from God to God

و أنا عائذٌ بِفَضلِکَ هارِبٌ مِنکَ إلَیکَ.

I seek refuge in Your grace, fleeing from You to You!

O God, I sometimes fall short of the profound connection I seek during prayer and reflection. I recognize that these experiences may stem from my limitations. I humbly ask for your forgiveness and guidance, surrendering completely to your grace. The concept of 'fleeing from You to You' signifies my dependence on your benevolence to overcome these challenges.

The shortcomings that hinder my focus and devotion during prayer stem entirely from Your divine will. However, when I seek refuge from these shortcomings, it is not to defy Your plan. I intend not to flee from You but seek Your forgiveness and mercy. Just as I have placed my complete trust in You, my efforts to overcome these shortcomings are ultimately directed toward You. Inherently, I seek refuge in You from my imperfections.

While I acknowledge the existence of these limitations, I recognize that they ultimately stem from your divine plan. Though I may contemplate their purpose, perhaps as safeguards against arrogance and self-righteousness, reminding me of my inherent human condition, I ultimately trust your benevolence. I turn to your inherent capacity for forgiveness, seeking absolution from these limitations, ultimately a product of your divine design.

By analogy, consider how someone moving from one room to another within their own house remains within the confines of their property. Similarly, transferring money from one pocket to another doesn't constitute acquiring something new. It simply involves a change in the location of one's existing possessions.

Extending this analogy to the spiritual realm, O God, I recognize that I am completely under Your dominion, as are all my actions. Therefore, any attempt to escape from You is ultimately a movement that, while seemingly away, ultimately leads back to You.

The Certainty of God's Forgiveness for Those Who Believe in His Mercy

مُذنِجٌ ماوَعدتَ من الصفحِ عمّن أحسنَ بک ظنّا.

I believe in Your promise of forgiveness for those who hold You in high regard. This promise is my anchor, and I will not relinquish it, regardless of the transgressions I commit, the errors I make, or any perceived distance from Your grace.

Divine Providence, though my transgressions may warrant punishment, a withdrawal of my capacity for devotion, or a state of spiritual detachment, I shall not relinquish my faith. Even if banished from Your presence and cast into a state of estrangement, I hold steadfast to the unwavering belief in Your promise of forgiveness for those who maintain a positive perception of You.

I am fully committed to addressing this matter. Having accepted this responsibility, I am determined to see it through, regardless of potential challenges. I focus on the following key principle: honoring the promise of forgiveness extended to those who hold us in high regard.

This strong sense of purpose can be compared to the powerful force that draws iron filings to a magnet. Initially dispersed, the filings instantly concentrate around the magnet, creating a clear structure. No matter how scattered or disturbed, their inherent properties compel them to return to the magnet, their source of attraction.

Similarly, I have identified a core principle that guides me. This unwavering commitment is my guiding light, and I remain firmly dedicated to it.

إلهی انتَ أوسعُ فضلاً و أعظمُ حلماً من أن تُقایسنی بعملی او أن تَستزِلّنی بخطیئتی. و ما انا یا سیّدی و ما خطری؟! هَبنی بفضلک!

O God. Your grace is more vast, and Your forbearance is greater than comparing me to my deeds or causing me to stumble with my sins. What am I, O Master, and what is my significance? Grant me Your grace!

Divine source, your benevolence extends far beyond the capacity to judge my actions or quantify my deeds. What merit do my accomplishments truly hold? How pure are my intentions? With what degree of focus, purpose, and sincerity were they undertaken? Can their worth be truly measured?

We respectfully disagree that your judgment would be solely based on the imperfection inherent in our actions. It is not our place to present our deeds with the expectation of measurement, valuation, or reward based on their perceived merit. Your divine grace, O Exalted One, transcends such limitations.

Moreover, attributing to You a meticulous examination and judgment of every action's purity, intent, and cleanliness, resulting in corresponding punishment, is incompatible with our understanding of Your immense patience and boundless grace. We believe Your mercy is far more extensive. Even in the face of our failings, Your grace persists, transforming them into something commendable. It is as if You proclaim, "Despite imperfections, I perceive the underlying motivations and bestow blessings accordingly." In essence, You do not proclaim: "This is unacceptable." Instead, You say: "Consider it perfect."

Oh God, Your patience extends far beyond our comprehension. We commit transgressions yet cling to the hope that You will record them as acts of virtue in our ledger of deeds, even erasing any residue of our wrongdoing.

We understand that a close examination of our actions, down to the finest detail, might not reveal deeds worthy of the highest scrutiny. We readily admit that our efforts fall short of absolute perfection. Nevertheless, we humbly offer them to you, invoking your name and relying solely on your infinite grace for acceptance.

We implore You, Exalted God, to rise above the limitations of our human understanding. To respond with reactive measures to our imperfections would render us utterly helpless. Your infinite majesty surpasses such a response. We do not seek

retribution for our transgressions, nor do we desire to suffer the consequences of our actions. Instead, we humbly beseech Your immense generosity to overlook our faults.

O God, how insignificant I feel myself in Your presence. Can my actions truly hold any weight in Your eyes? What am I, Lord, and what is my consequence before You? My deeds seem utterly inconsequential when compared to Your vastness.

هَبني بِفَضلِكَ.

O my Master, O my Lord, O my Patron, forgive me by Your grace!

لا تُؤاخِذني بِعَدلِكَ.

O God do not hold me accountable by Your justice.

Grant me, I implore, not the judgment you hold so righteously but your boundless compassion. Should your perfect justice prevail, none of our deeds could stand. Instead, may your infinite mercy envelop us and grant forgiveness.

و تَصَدَّق عَلَيَّ بِعَفوِكَ.

Bestow upon me Your pardon as an act of charity.

و جَلِّلني بِسِترِكَ.

Cover me with Your veil.

و اعفُ عن تَوبيخي بِكَرَمِ وَجهِكَ.

Forgive my reproach by the grace of Your countenance.

O God, I acknowledge my transgressions and accept the consequences they may bring. However, I humbly implore Your forgiveness, trusting in Your mercy and grace. Though I am unworthy, you are the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, and I plead for Your pardon. As You are the sole source of forgiveness, I beseech You to cleanse me of my sins.

O God, I introduce myself to You:

سَيِّدي أنا الصَّغيرُ الّذي رَبَّيتَهُ و أنا الجاهِلُ الّذي عَلَّمتَهُ و أنا الضّالُّ الّذي هَدَيتَهُ و أنا الوَضيعُ الّذي رَفَعتَهُ و أنا الخائِفُ الّذي آمَنتَهُ و الجائِعُ الّذي أشبَعتَهُ و العَطشانُ الّذي أروَيتَهُ و العاري الّذي كَسَوتَهُ و الفَقيرُ الّذي أغنَيتَهُ و الضَّعيفُ الّذي قَوَّيتَهُ و الذَّليلُ الّذي أعزَزتَهُ و السَّقيمُ الّذي شَفَيتَهُ و السّائِلُ الّذي أعطَيتَهُ و المُذنِبُ الّذي سَتَرتَهُ و الخاطِئُ الّذي أقَلتَهُ و أنا القَليلُ الّذي كَثَّرتَهُ و المُستَضعَفُ الّذي نَصَرتَهُ و أنا الطَّريدُ الّذي آوَيتَهُ!

My Master, I am the small one you raised and the ignorant one you taught. I am the lost one whom You have guided, the lowly one whom You have exalted, and the fearful one whom You have made secure. I am the hungry one whom You have fed, I am the thirsty one whom You have quenched, and I am the naked one whom You have clothed. I am the poor one whom You have enriched, the weak one whom You have strengthened, and I am the humble one whom You have honored. I am the sick one whom You have healed, the beggar whom You have given, and the sinner whom You have covered. I am the erring one whom You have forgiven, the few whom You have multiplied, the oppressed one whom You have helped, and the banished one whom You have sheltered.

If you were to hold me accountable, I would stand before you. You raised me when I was weak and nurtured me under your protection. I am your creation.

الذي أحسن كل شيء خلقه وبدأ خلق الإنسن من طين.

He who created everything and perfected it and began the creation of man from clay. (Quran, 32:7)

قال ربنا الذي أعطى كل شيء خلقه ثم هدى.

Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation and then guided it. (Quran, 20:50)

So I am a small one whom You have raised.

و أنا الجاهلُ الّذى علّمتَه.

Oh, Divine One, I stand before You as the ignorant one You have enlightened. Lost in the depths of unknowing, You have bestowed upon me knowledge, a gift that ultimately belongs to You.

Divine source, while acknowledging the wisdom you have imparted upon me, I humbly beseech you to consider my true nature – one of fundamental unknowing. How can I be held responsible for knowledge that is not truly mine but rather a gift bestowed upon me? The inherent lack of knowledge within me, the essence of my being, should be examined. Yet, if such is my core nature, what is there to be judged?

Creator, why would you hold me accountable for the inherent limitations of my existence? This ignorance is inseparable from my being, an unavoidable consequence of my finite nature. I am a vessel of limited knowledge and understanding. My very essence reflects this finitude. Any wisdom or insight I possess is a mere reflection of your infinite light. You are the source of all illumination, revealing the world's true nature. Without your guiding light, all would be shrouded in darkness, leaving us incapable of comprehending even the most fundamental aspects of our existence.

و أنا الضّالُ الّذى هدَيتَه.

I am the one who went astray, and you have guided me.

O God, I acknowledge that I was once lost and adrift, wandering without direction or purpose. I was blind to the truth and mired in confusion. To be lost in such a way is to be utterly helpless, unable to discern the most basic realities. Like one who cannot distinguish their right hand from their left, I lacked the fundamental understanding to navigate the world. My awareness was no greater than that of a simple insect, and my ability to comprehend even the most basic truths was severely limited.

The Prophet, guided by the hand of God

The Quran states in the following verse:

ألم يجدك يتيما فأوى. ووجدك ضالا فهدى.

Did He not find you an orphan and shelter you? And did He not find you astray and guide you? (Quran, 93:6-7)

Some may question how a prophet, divinely guided by God, could ever be lost or misled. The answer, however, lies within the very address itself.

When the human nafs(ego) neglects the divine gifts bestowed upon it and fixates solely on its finite existence to the absolute, it becomes spiritually adrift, lacking true knowledge and comprehension. In this state, all guidance, illumination, wisdom, and perfection are understood to emanate from and ultimately return to the divine source. Those who follow this path and seek union with these divine attributes attain true blessedness. Conversely, those who fail to do so remain forever lost in their inherent limitations, vulnerability, and spiritual confusion.

و أنا الضّالُ الّذى هدَيتَه.

I am the one who was astray whom You have guided. Divine Providence, I would not have received your guidance without your will to lead me.

لا تُسألُ عن فعلِكَ و لا تُنازَعُ في مُلكِكَ.[26]

You will not be questioned about Your actions, nor will You be disputed in Your dominion.

لا يسأل عما يفعل وهم يسألون.

He is not questioned about what He does; they will be questioned. (Quran, 21:23)

Human communication hinges entirely on your divine will and permission. Our ability to speak, articulate thoughts, and even the very essence of our being exists solely at your discretion. Without your grace, we would be utterly incapable of even the most rudimentary actions, declaring any attempt at dialogue or movement impossible. Even the most resolute individuals, faced with your will, are rendered powerless, unable to exert even the slightest influence on their actions. This absolute sovereignty and control over creation highlight the vastness of your power and the limitations of our existence.

The Impact of Innate Qualities, Free Will, Relationships, and Actions on Human Destiny

While divine providence ultimately shapes human destiny, this process is not arbitrary. Several complex and fundamental principles beyond human reason's grasp contribute to each individual's life. These principles include *fiṭrah* (Innate Qualities), free will, relationships, actions, moral choices, and repentance.

Consequently, individuals may sometimes find themselves unable to perform intended virtuous deeds. This inability stems from the complex interplay of these factors shaping their destiny. This framework helps us understand how individual lives unfold within the broader context of divine providence.

و أنا الضّالُّ الّذي هَدَيْتَهُ.

I am the one who was astray whom You have guided.

و أنا الوَضيعُ الّذي رَفَعتَهُ.

I am the lowly one whom You have raised.

ورفعنا لك ذكرك.

We have raised your remembrance, mention, and fame. (Quran, 94:4)

The renown and acclaim surrounding the Prophet are not the product of his endeavors but rather a testament to the divine will. During the period when he sought recognition, it was not bestowed upon him. However, God has chosen to elevate his remembrance and influence in his detachment from such desires.

This distinction is crucial. The Prophet's fame and reputation are not personal possessions but a divine blessing to serve a greater purpose. Consequently, there is no potential for pride or egotism to arise, as this recognition ultimately glorifies God and not the individual.

Imam Sajjad cultivated a deep spiritual bond with God, strengthening his steadfastness in faith. This spiritual attainment is solely attributable to God's will and is impervious to external influences.

There is a contrast between Imam Sajjad's faith and the fragility of others whose beliefs are easily swayed by doubt. These individuals are likened to "homeless birds" tossed about by the elements, lacking inner strength and conviction. Imam Sajjad's spiritual elevation is not for worldly recognition but as proof of his devotion and connection with God.

ورفعناه مكانا عليا.

We raised him to a high place. (Quran 19:57)

بل رفعه الله إليه.

But Allah raised him to Himself. (Quran 4:158)

In the case of Idris, God elevated him to a high station. Concerning Jesus (peace be upon him), the scripture states, "We raised him to Ourselves!"

Where is God? He is not located above the galaxy or the sun. God transcends location and resides in absolute oneness and a limitless horizon. He is *Basīṭ* (uncompounded, with a unified and indivisible essence). His essence encompasses all His Names and Attributes. We brought Jesus to this state, lifted and kept him alive with Us! This is the true elevation bestowed by God.

Human Tranquility: A Divine Gift

و أنا الخائفُ الّذي أمّنتَه.

I am the fearful one whom You have made safe.

The sense of security and peace individuals experience is not self-generated but rather a divine gift. The constant presence of countless dangers surrounds us, each with the potential to overwhelm us. However, the human mind is mercifully shielded from dwelling on these threats, allowing us to navigate life calmly.

While individuals possess a single state of health, they are constantly vulnerable to countless illnesses that lurk around every corner. Similarly, life itself is a temporary arrangement with a definitive end. Despite these sobering realities, the human mind often operates with a subconscious optimism, allowing us to live in the present without anxieties about the future or the inevitable.

Dwelling on the possibility of imminent death can be paralyzing, potentially leading to an immediate loss of life. However, individuals can navigate life's challenges by acknowledging their dependence on a higher power and appreciating the divine gift of peace with greater resilience and understanding. God, in His wisdom, shields humans from constantly dwelling on the inevitability of death. This allows individuals to function and live relatively peaceful lives.

If the constant awareness of impending death were ingrained in the human mind, society would likely experience widespread anxiety and disruption. Despite everyday life's inherent anxieties and dangers, humans can navigate them largely due to this divine protection. Otherwise, people would not be able to sleep, and all hospitals would be turned into insane asylums. The doctors themselves, who treat the sick, would all be mentally ill and would have to be chained up so that they would not tear people apart.

و الجائعُ الّذي أشبَعتَه.

The hungry one whom You have satiated.

The Joy of the Fasting Person at the Time of Breaking the Fast and at the Time of Meeting God

للصّائم فَرحتان، فَرحَةٌ عِندَ الإفطار، و فَرحَةٌ عِندَ لِقاءِ الله.[27]

The happiness experienced by the fasting person when breaking the fast transcends both the fulfillment of duty and the act of eating food.

I am the yearning soul whom You have graciously nourished. A deep desire for You consumes my very being. This yearning is intrinsic to my essence, for You created me as Your representative on Earth. Yet, You beckon me even closer, inviting me to reflect Your divine beauty and perfection in all aspects of my being. It is towards this ultimate communion that You draw me.

و العَطشانُ الّذي أروَيتَه.

The thirsty one whom You have satiated.

There is a profound depth to experiencing fulfillment directly from the divine. We may find temporary satisfaction in worldly pursuits, but these can often be fleeting or even leave us worse off. In contrast, imagine receiving a gift of unparalleled significance: crystal-clear water, chilled to perfection, presented in a magnificent goblet. This offering comes not from a mundane source but from the very wellspring of paradise, blessed by a being of radiant beauty whose presence inspires awe. The invitation to partake in this gift transcends mere physical sustenance; it embodies the joy and fulfillment that come from a direct connection with the divine.

به تیغم گر کشد دستش نگیرم
وگر تیرم زند منت پذیرم
کمان ابرویت را گو بزن تیر
که پیش دست و بازویت بمیرم.[28]

Though blade be drawn, my hand will not engage,
His arrow's kiss, a gift beyond all wage.
Your brow's curved bow, let loose its feathered dart,
For by your hand and arm, I wish to part.

According to a narration, when the time comes for a believer's soul to be taken, the Angel of Death, Azrael, arrives to fulfill his duty. However, the believer may still have lingering attachments to the world. He may cherish his loved ones, his achievements, and the life he has built.

This narration, reported by the esteemed scholar Kulayni in his work "al-Kafi" and Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid Barqi in his book "Mahasin," is highly reliable. Shaykh Tusi further narrates it in "Amali." Notably, the source of this narration is either Imam Sadiq or the Prophet Muhammad himself (peace be upon them).[29]

The narration centers on God's hesitation in carrying out any action except for taking the soul of a faithful believer.

ما تَرَدَّدتُ فی شَیء کَتَرَدُّدی عِندَ قَبضِ روحِ عَبدِ المُؤمِنِ یَکرَهُ المَوتَ و أنا أکرَهُ مَساءَتَه![30]

God says: I did not hesitate in anything as I hesitated in taking the soul of the believing servant who hates death, and I hate to displease him!

While God's immutable essence is beyond hesitation, taking a believer's soul presents a nuanced paradox.

The narration highlights two seemingly conflicting aspects. On one hand, God's infinite wisdom dictates the believer's inevitable transition. However, God's inherent compassion seeks to minimize potential suffering for the believer during this process. This theological tension is likened to a common human experience: the desire to help a loved one while recognizing that the intended assistance might cause them unintended hardship.

God's Ultimate Grace: A Narrative on Spiritual Transition

A narrative unfolds, revealing God's infinite mercy bestowed upon faithful believers as they transition from the earthly realm. The story depicts God entrusting the Angel of Death with two exceptionally fragrant flowers, known as 'Rayhanatin' (ریحانتین). One flower is named 'Muskhiyyah' (مُسخیَه), meaning 'generous,' while the other is named 'Munsiyyah' (مُنسیَه), meaning 'forgetful.' These flowers, more than mere fragrances, are vessels of the divine essence of God. Muskhiyyah symbolizes an overwhelming sense of generosity that engulfs the believer upon receiving it, prompting them to willingly relinquish their worldly possessions. Munsiyyah signifies a peaceful detachment, allowing the believer to effortlessly let go of earthly concerns upon encountering its aroma. The narrative underscores that these flowers are not just fragrant; they emanate the divine essence of God. The captivating aroma, representing

God's presence and love, transcends the intoxicating effects of earthly scents, invoking a profound sense of awe and reverence in the audience.[31]

Another narration offers a unique perspective on the transition of the believing soul. The narrative describes that two gentle breezes originate from the "sanctuary of God.[32]

ای صبا نکهتی از منزل آن یار بیار![33]

O gentle breeze, bring a fragrance from the abode of that beloved!

Nukhat(نکهت) means a pleasant smell; the pleasant smell of the mouth is called Nukhat. This quote invokes a yearning for the divine presence and the blessings of the "Immortal Islands," a metaphor for the afterlife.

When these two 'winds' (Muskhiyyah and Munsiyyah) reach the believer, they experience a state of complete surrender and detachment from worldly concerns. This peaceful transition, devoid of distress, reassures the believer that they are spared the discomfort typically associated with the departure of the soul. Instead, they experience a gentle change, forgetting everything earthly and embracing the spiritual destination.[34]

و الجائعُ الّذی أشبَعتَه.

The hungry one whom you have fed.

العَطشانُ الّذی أروَیتَه.

The thirsty one whom you have quenched.

وَ العاری الّذی کَسَوتَه.

The naked one whom you have clothed.

وَ الفقیرُ الّذی أغنَیتَه.

The poor one whom you have enriched.

وَ الضَّعیفُ الّذی قَوَّیتَه.

The weak one whom You have strengthened.

While considering the complexities of human existence, questions often arise concerning our strength and vulnerability. Examining the embryonic stage within the maternal womb undeniably reveals an inherent state of fragility and dependence. Conversely, a deeper understanding of the intricate processes of embryonic development fosters a profound appreciation for the extraordinary resilience and remarkable potential present even in life's earliest stages. However, the issue of abortion legalization introduces a complex ethical consideration, as it potentially impacts the most vulnerable members of our society, raising important questions surrounding the protection and ethical treatment of those who may not yet possess the ability to advocate for themselves.

Since everyone begins life as an embryo, individuals who advocate for the permissibility of abortion are effectively arguing that anyone who expressed this view should have aborted themselves. This follows from the fact that they, too, were once embryos. If any of us had been aborted, we wouldn't be here today. Therefore, endorsing the permissibility of abortion is akin to condoning the murder of all humankind.[35] This aligns with the Quranic verse 5:32, which states:

من قتل نفساً بغير نفس أو فساد في الأرض فكأنما قتل الناس جميعاً.

Whoever takes the life of another human being without due process or for spreading corruption in the land, it is as if they have killed all of humanity. (Quran, 5:32)

و الذّلیلُ الّذی أعزَزتَه.

I was humiliated, and you honored me. I was despised, and you gave me dignity.

وَ السَّقِيمُ الَّذِى شَفَيْتَهُ.

The sick one whom you healed.

وَ السَّائِلُ الَّذِى أعطَيْتَهُ.

The one who asked you and you gave him.

و المُذنِبُ الَّذِى سَتَرْتَهُ.

The sinner whom you covered up.

وَ الخاطِئُ الَّذِى أقَلْتَهُ.

The wrongdoer whom you excused.

In your grace, God, you kept me from stumbling because of that error.

و أنا القَلِيلُ الَّذِى كَثَّرْتَهُ.

I am the little one whom You made many.

وَ المُستَضعَفُ الَّذِى نَصَرْتَهُ.

In the past, I lacked resilience and was susceptible to manipulation by powerful entities, whether individuals, governments, or persuasive ideologies. This rendered me vulnerable to their influence and ultimately led to a humbling experience. However, your intervention empowered me to overcome this vulnerability and reclaim my strength.

وَ أنا الطَّرِيدُ الَّذِى أوَيْتَهُ.

Though I once strayed far, cast out and alone, You offered me refuge, welcomed me, and brought me into Your sacred embrace.

إنَّ لَنا فِيكَ أمَلاً طَوِيلاً.[36]

Divine Providence, having guided us to this crucial moment, we hold steadfast in our faith that you will not forsake us. Indeed, our trust in you remains unshaken. We continue to dedicate ourselves to our ongoing pursuits in your service, and our hopes for the future rest firmly upon you.

You, the architect of this grand cosmos, set in motion the celestial and terrestrial spheres, from the sun and stars to our very world, culminating in the emergence of humanity. Yet, our journey doesn't end here. We stand ready to collaborate with you to fulfill our purpose from this juncture. We implore you to guide us on this path and not forsake us.

ابر و باد و مه و خورشید و فلک در کارند
تا تو نانی به کف آریّ و به غفلت نخوری
این همه از بهر تو سرگشته و فرمانبردار
شرط انصاف نباشد که تو فرمان نبری.[37]

Clouds and breeze, moon and sun, and heavens all align,
To bring you bread, lest you in heedlessness decline.
All these for you in servitude and toil engage,
Would it be fair for your duty to disengage?

Humanity can grasp the interconnectedness of existence through rigorous philosophical and mathematical inquiry. From the state of our being to the formation of galaxies, a symphony of intricate relationships unfolds, binding every element to the concept of actuality. The precise interplay of these systems is so delicately balanced that even a single disruption could trigger a catastrophic collapse. This intricate tapestry of creation serves a greater purpose, culminating in the potential for human perfection. You have bestowed wealth, knowledge, power, and ultimately, life itself, each element contributing to our well-being and fostering the potential for our ultimate flourishing. To suggest that a single transgression or lapse in judgment would warrant complete abandonment or the withdrawal of Your acceptance is simply untenable.

إنَّ لَنا فِيكَ أمَلاً طَوِيلاً.

Our longing for union with You is immense!

We hope in You, long to reach You, and have a great appetite. You created us with an inherent yearning akin to the thirst that drives a parched person to seek water or a starving individual to seek food. But just as knocking on the doors of impoverished relatives offers no solution to their hunger, relying on earthly sources cannot quench our spiritual thirst. You, alone, are our Provider, the source of sustenance and fulfillment.

We humbly implore You to continue the sustenance You have graciously provided thus far. While we acknowledge Your generosity, our yearning for Your blessings is boundless. It transcends the limitations of earthly desires. You are our sole sustainer, and the means of fulfilling our needs are solely within Your domain. We implicitly trust Your boundless mercy and enduring patience. We place our complete faith in Your promise of forgiveness for those who hold You in the highest esteem.

مُنْتَجِزٌ ما وَعَدتَ مِنَ الصَّفحِ عَمَّن أحسَنَ بِكَ ظَنّاً.[38]

Overwhelmed by our burdens, we implore You to grant us the sustenance we desperately seek. We acknowledge our limitations and recognize that such blessings are typically reserved for prophets and messengers. Yet, we place our faith solely in You, the ultimate source of all provision. Will You, in Your infinite generosity, answer our plea? If You withhold Your blessings, despair shall consume us. However, we would be grateful if you would grant our request. Now, we eagerly await Your response.

The Exalted God, as we approach the sacred Night of Power on this seventeenth night of Ramadan, we implore You to bless the less fortunate among us. Shower them with Your mercy and extend a hand of comfort and support. They have faithfully observed the fast and dedicated their nights to prayer and devotion, each contributing their offerings of faith and good deeds, hoping for Your divine favor. We humbly beseech You; do not let their efforts go unrewarded. God willing, we hope to be granted such an opportunity.

اللهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ.

Session Thirteen
Love and Hope in God: the Way to Salvation

بسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم
و صلّى الله على محمّد و آله الطّاهرين
و لعنة الله على أعدائهم أجمعين

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
May God's peace and blessings be upon Muhammad and his pure family.
And the curse of God be upon all their enemies.

Requirements and effects of love

أنا يا ربّ الّذی لم أستحيک فی الخلاء و لم أراقبک فی الملاء، أنا صاحب الدّواهی العظمی، أنا الّذی علی سیّده اجترّی، أنا الّذی عصیت جبّار السّماء، أنا الّذی أعطیت علی معاصی الجلیل الرّشا، أنا الّذی حین بشّرت بها خرجت إلیها أسعی، أنا الّذی أمهلتنی فما ارعویت، و سترت علیّ فما استحییت، و عملت بالمعاصی فتعدّیت، و أسقطتنی من عینک فما بالیت.
O God, I am the one who did not feel ashamed of you in solitude and loneliness, and I did not observe your rights in public and appearance.

The inner attention of the lover to his beloved and its effect

On the path toward spiritual fulfillment, the individual's primary objective is to achieve divine favor. Such an individual is resolute in their commitment to never displease their creator, both in public and private. This dedication empowers them to discern, through their own self-reflection and inner guidance, the actions that align with and diverge from divine will.

Pursuing divine pleasure is akin to a lover's devotion to their beloved. The lover's thoughts, mind, and innermost being are perpetually focused on understanding and fulfilling their beloved's desires openly and privately. This devotion is the essence of true love.

Furthermore, the lover strives to create circumstances that foster the beloved's happiness. Conversely, he prevents situations that could cause even the slightest displeasure to the beloved, even if the lover does not directly cause those situations. This resolute commitment to the beloved's well-being exemplifies the true demands of genuine love.

Ultimately, regardless of the object of one's affection, these characteristics represent the natural consequences and requirements of profound love.

The Profound Impact of Love: A Mother's Intuition

The depth of love's influence is beautifully illustrated by the relationship between a mother and her child. A mother's thoughts are invariably drawn to her child, regardless of their physical proximity. The mother's mind remains connected whether the child is traveling, at home, asleep, awake, healthy, or sick. This constant awareness parallels a state of self-vigilance (*murāqabah*) or focused mindfulness.

Through this profound connection, the mother intuitively understands her child's preferences and aversions. No external instruction is needed: "Do this, and your child will be pleased; refrain from that, for it will displease them." Acting as her guide, the mother comprehends these nuances through her inherent conscience and understanding, informed by her identity and experiences. This connection between mother and child is similar to the inseparable bond between a branch and its parent tree, granting the mother a deep awareness of her child's unique characteristics and inner world.

All forms of love, parental, familial, romantic, or otherwise, ultimately stem from a singular source—the love of God. This universal love is believed to manifest itself within individuals as rays of affection directed toward others.

When individuals pursue love, they are expected to maintain appropriate boundaries and avoid actions that might cause displeasure to the object of their affection. This pursuit of love is understood to cultivate a closer connection with the beloved.

Instead of relying on external instructions, the lover, through self-reflection and their "inner gauge," intuitively discerns what pleases and displeases the beloved. Guided by this understanding, the lover strives to provide for the beloved's desires and avoid actions that might cause negativity.

Divine Love and the Path to Closeness

Individuals devoted to serving God strive to cultivate a deeper connection through the power of love. This intensification of love is natural, as God is the ultimate source of all love. He has instilled a spark of love within every being, fostering a sense of mutual care and affection.

As the individual's love for God intensifies, their closeness to God grows. In turn, this deepened proximity further fuels their love. Thus, each stage of closeness and love reinforces and strengthens the other, guiding the individual toward the ultimate goal of becoming truly beloved by God.

The dedication required for this path is untiring. Like a mother's constant thoughts of her child, regardless of the situation - asleep, awake, socializing, reading, or attending to household chores - one walking the path of love remains focused. The child remains present in their thoughts, even during conversations with others. This internal connection transcends the external context, holding a deeper significance than the surrounding interactions. While outwardly engaged, their inner dialogue focuses on their love for their loved one.

The Impact of Neglecting Love: Consequences and Isolation

Engaging in actions that diverge from a foundation of love can significantly lose previously described benefits. This deviation can sever connections with the divine and others, leading individuals to prioritize their chosen pursuit above all else.

Those seeking material wealth may consume their lives by pursuing and acquiring possessions. Individuals driven by desire may witness their lives dominated by sensual gratification. Similarly, those craving power may become fixated on attaining and maintaining control. This prioritization severs the connection to a higher purpose, resulting in isolation and drifting as they navigate a world solely focused on worldly desires.

Witnessing God's Presence in Solitude and Public: The Effect of the Path of Love

أنا يا ربّ الّذي لم أستحيك في الخلاء، و لم أراقبك في الملاء!

O Lord, I am the one who did not feel ashamed of You in solitude and did not observe Your right in public!

A follower dedicated to the path of love cultivates a constant awareness of Your presence in public and private settings. In solitude, they experience a profound sense of Your presence and guidance, integrating Your awareness into every aspect of their actions. This deep connection fosters a steady commitment to ethical conduct, preventing them from transgression, even when hidden from others.

Their adherence to ethical conduct mirrors the love of a mother. Imagine a mother alone at night, her beloved child far away. Even in their absence, the mother's love remains steadfast, guiding her actions and preventing her from any behavior that could displease the child. This steadfast love transcends physical proximity within the mother's heart and mind. Similarly, the devoted servant's love for You transcends their

physical surroundings as a constant moral compass, guiding their public and private actions.

□ Individuals with a profound love for the Divine refrain from engaging in transgressions, disobeying directives, or neglecting their obligations, even in private. This devotion acts as a constant internal compass, a divine guidance system, guiding their actions and ensuring they align with the will of the Beloved. Any action that risks causing a deviation from this compass triggers an internal' radar,' prompting immediate self-correction and preventing the commission of any wrongdoing. This heightened awareness is especially prevalent during periods of solitude.

The Steadfast Connection: Unwavering Love in Public and Private

Even during public gatherings, crowds, chaos, disputes, trials, and conflicts, the individual on the path of love remains visibly connected to the Divine. Despite the commotion, the secret of love remains within them, preventing them from being distracted by external forces and drawn towards superficialities. This connection is a private affair and a declaration of their love for the Divine.

Consider a mother who has lost a child. Even if she dresses in wedding attire and attends a wedding, she remains connected to her grief. She may congratulate the newlyweds and partake in the festivities, but her heart remains attached to the memory of her child. She performs these actions without being drawn to them. Her wedding attire is a superficial layer that does not bring her joy or contentment. The excitement of the wedding does not captivate her.

Similarly, the individual who interacts with God based on love maintains a steadfast connection in public. Their true connection remains intact amid battles, conversations, disputes, transactions, the marketplace, and all the commotion and unrest. These external forces do not engulf them; they remain mere appearances. Without the thread of love, solitude, and public interactions become deficient, and hidden and revealed aspects of life are affected.

The Discrepancy in Private and Public Behavior

The reason for the discrepancy in human behavior between private and public settings lies in the individual's motivations. In private, when the beloved (God) is not visibly present, the individual may engage in transgressions. This is because the motivation for their actions in private is not based on love for God but rather on other factors such as fear of social disapproval or the desire for personal gain.

In public, on the other hand, individuals strive to conform to societal norms and expectations. They may perform actions that are pleasing to others, even if they go against their values or beliefs. This is because their primary concern is maintaining their social status and avoiding criticism.

The root cause of this discrepancy is the individual's misalignment of priorities. When their actions are motivated by the desire for social approval or personal gain, they lose sight of their true connection with God. They become susceptible to external influences and are easily swayed by popular opinion.

The Impact of Misalignment

The misalignment of priorities significantly impacts individuals' lives. In their pursuit of external validation, they sacrifice their inner values and integrity. They become disconnected from their true selves and live an inauthentic and superficial life.

The solution to this problem lies in realigning one's priorities with the divine. When individuals reestablish their connection with God, they gain a higher perspective and a deeper understanding of their purpose in life. They become motivated by love and compassion, and their actions align with their true values.

Traditionally, shaving beards was deemed socially unacceptable. The weight of societal disapproval was such that individuals might have engaged in other transgressions yet refrained from shaving. However, as this taboo eroded, shaving beards became increasingly commonplace as the perception of its wrongness diminished, highlighting the significant role of societal pressures in shaping our actions.

The Quran refers to this misalignment of priorities as "following the whims of the people" (*Ahwā*-اهواء).[39] This is contrasted with the "truth" (*ḥaqq*), which represents the divine principles and values. When individuals follow their whims, they stray from the path of truth and become susceptible to falsehood and misguidance, emphasizing the grave consequences of such actions.

The discrepancy in human behavior between private and public settings reflects the individual's inner state. When people's actions are motivated by love for God, they maintain a consistent moral compass regardless of external circumstances. However, when their priorities are misaligned, they become susceptible to external influences, and their behavior becomes inconsistent and unreliable.

Maintaining Awareness of the Divine: A Cornerstone of Authentic Faith

For individuals seeking to embark on the path of love for God and cultivate genuine faith, conscious awareness of the Divine in all public and private life aspects is paramount. External opinions and societal pressures pale in comparison to this primary consideration. If God, the Exalted, decrees something that opposes societal desires, be it met with widespread criticism or complete acceptance, its significance should remain inconsequential. This principle of prioritizing divine will over worldly approval is an essential tenet that must be consistently upheld.

Imam Sajjad's (peace be upon him) Complaint of Lack of Attention to God in Public and Private

أنا يا ربِّ الَّذي لَم أستَحيِكَ فِي الخَلاءِ و لَم أُراقِبكَ فِي المَلاءِ!

In this passage, Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) expresses his grief and lamentation to God, saying: "O Lord! I am the one who did not feel ashamed of You in private, and I did not observe You in public!"

أنا صاحِبُ الدَّواهِي العُظمى.

I am the one who bears immense calamities.

What greater calamity can there be than for a person to disregard the rights of the Beloved in both private and public, even for a fleeting moment?

simply abstaining from certain actions in public while indulging in them privately is insufficient on the path of love. This path demands a much deeper and nuanced understanding of fulfilling the Beloved's (God's) rights.

The level of precision expected is so high that even a fleeting, insubstantial thought, "like a fly passing by and making a sound," is considered a lapse in vigilance, modesty, and obedience. This meticulousness can appear overwhelming and potentially lead to confusion and despair.

Ordinary sins are often perceived as limited to specific actions like alcohol consumption, fornication, or gambling. However, certain individuals may consider even technically minor sins as major offenses due to their heightened devotion and commitment. They strive to remain completely free from any transgression throughout their lives.

Beyond avoiding major and minor sins, some individuals even abstain from actions considered "disliked" (*makrūh*) and strive to engage solely in "permissible"

(*mubāḥ*) acts. For such individuals, all permissible actions become "recommended" (*mustaḥabb*) due to their sincere intention of seeking closeness to God.

Finally, the most dedicated individuals go beyond outward actions and actively purify their inner thoughts. Even fleeting thoughts that may be considered transgressions on their specific path are meticulously avoided.[40]

The Precise Scales of Judgment in the Hereafter

We use the scales analogy to illustrate the incredible precision with which deeds will be measured in the Hereafter. The scales are so sensitive that even a transient thought can be considered a transgression in that realm, which is the realm of love. This leads to the individual exclaiming in anguish, "How could I do such a thing?"

Some ordinary shop scales are not very precise and may not register a difference of a few kilograms. Others are more accurate for weighing heavier loads but may not be precise to the nearest hundred grams. Some scales can measure up to a gram but not to a hundredth of a gram. Highly sensitive scales can even detect the weight of a single page of paper or a pencil line drawn on it.

The scales used in the Day of Judgment will be far more precise than any. Even the slightest deviation from the path of love and righteousness will be detected and accounted for. This level of precision is necessary because the rewards or punishments are infinitely higher in the Hereafter, where the eternal destiny of each individual is being weighed.

Even a transitory thought not in line with love and righteousness can be considered a transgression.

انا صاحب الدّواهی الّعظمی!

I am the bearer of immense calamities.

انا الّذی علی سیّده اجترى.

I am the one who dared against his master.

أنا الّذی عصیت جبّار السّماء.

I am the one who disobeyed the powerful one of the heavens.

I stand before you as one who has transgressed against the Divine Power, the All-Subduing One (*qahhār*). His will is absolute, His decrees undeniable, and His actions are swift and decisive. There is no room for amusement or frivolity in His purpose; all He ordains comes to pass. I deeply regret my transgression, which has brought about a terrible consequence.

انا الّذی اعطیت علی معاصی الجلیل الرّشا.

I represent the act of attempting to influence a divine being through corrupt means. This results in the subversion of morality, where right becomes wrong and wrong becomes right. The influence of temptation distorts perception, creating a false reality. This distortion can be seen as a form of bribery, where the human ego (nafs) seeks to manipulate the will of the divine.

Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) on the Levels of Human Response to God's Generosity and Kindness

أنا الّذی حین بشّرت بها خرجت إلیها اسعی!

Upon receiving the news, I was the first to act upon it. Unfortunately, my eagerness led me astray. I did not hesitate, nor did I consider the consequences, and thus found myself drawn toward a transgression.

أنا الّذی امهلتنی فما ارعویت.

I am the one whom You have given respite to, but I have not turned back.

In the Holy Quran, on the Day of Judgment, when people are present before God, the Most High God addresses them.

أولم نعمركم ما يتذكر فيه من تذكر.

Did We not give you a long enough life for whoever wanted to remember to remember? (Quran, 35:37)

This address is directed at those who have reached the age of eighteen and subsequently died. In other words, an individual who has passed a few years beyond puberty has been given ample opportunities to remember and be reminded. God is fully aware of those who have surpassed this age.

و سترت علي فما استحييت.

You covered me up, so I was not ashamed. You covered up my evil deeds and sins, but I was not ashamed, and I repeated Your disobedience. You covered up, but I pulled away again.

و عملت بالمعاصي فتعديت.

I sinned and transgressed, and my actions had no limits.

Driven by the delusional structures my mind constructed, I mistook fabricated plans and illusions for reality. This unconstrained framework fueled my transgressions, leading me to overstep boundaries to the greatest extent possible.

و أسقطتني من عينك فما باليت.

Oh God, my transgressions have led me away from Your divine grace. I recognize a growing darkness within myself, a sense of estrangement from You. This is a clear sign, a warning that I have strayed from Your mercy. I understand that I must seek amends, yet I have failed to do so, allowing this darkness to persist. My continued transgressions have only deepened this separation. Despite these signs, I have remained neglectful, failing to mend my ways. I have fallen from Your favor, yet I have acted indifferently.

The Meaning of the Patience and Concealment of God

فبحلمك أمهلتني، و بسترك سترتني، حتى كأنك أغفلتني و من عقوبات المعاصي جنبتني، حتى كأنك استحييتني.

You have granted me respite through Your forbearance and concealment and covered me. It is as if You have forgotten my transgressions and spared me from the punishments of my sins, making it seem as though You have shown me shame.

The Exalted God, I confess my repeated transgressions. I have acted recklessly, disregarded Your guidance, and disrespected Your authority. I have failed to show the reverence due to You, my divine creator. Though You veiled my sins with Your forgiveness, I tore it away through my actions.

Your patience and forbearance with me have been boundless despite my continued failings. You granted me extended grace periods, offering me repeated opportunities to amend my ways. Yet, I persistently rejected Your mercy, like a rebellious child who repeatedly throws off a comforting blanket.

I acknowledge that I am like that child, O God. I have repeatedly cast aside the mantle of Your forgiveness and compassion. However, Your infinite patience has never trembled, and You have constantly offered me redemption.

حتى كأنك اغفلتني.

O God, our perception of Your forbearance led us astray. You granted us such an extended period of respite and demonstrated such remarkable patience and tolerance that we began to harbor the misguided belief that You were neglecting us. 'If God truly cared,' we reasoned, 'He would have delivered some form of chastisement by now.' We misconstrued Your forbearance as a lack of awareness, leading us to believe You had abandoned us entirely. We erroneously concluded that if You were truly attentive, You would have intervened with punishment, a wake-up call, or a demonstration of Your presence. This distorted perception stemmed from the immense depth of Your forbearance and the prolonged respite You bestowed upon us based on that very attribute.

و من عقوبات المعاصی جنّبتنی.

You have also shielded us from the torments and punishments we deserve for disobeying You. We continued to sin, yet You did not punish us.

حتّی کأنّک استحییتنی.

The magnitude of Your forbearance reached such an extent that it appeared almost like You were demonstrating modesty towards us. While we are the ones who should feel a sense of humility before You, Your unfailing mercy led You to withhold punishment for the transgressions we have committed despite them warranting consequences. You have allowed us autonomy by choosing not to hold us accountable. This exemplifies the vastness of Your forgiveness, generosity, and compassion.

O Lord, my disobedience is due to the dominance of my desires and the deception of my *nafs* (ego), not arrogance.

إلهی لم أعصک حین عصیتک و أنا بربوبیّتک جاحد، و لا بأمرک مستخفّ، و لا لعقوبتک متعرّض، و لا لوعیدک متهاون؛ و لکن خطیئة عرضت، و سوّلت لی نفسی، و غلبنی هوای، و أعاننی علیها شقوتی، و غرّنی سترک المرخی علیّ.

O my God, when I disobeyed You, it was not in denial of Your Lordship, nor did I belittle Your command, expose myself to Your punishment, nor treat Your warnings lightly. But it was a sin that came upon me, and my nafs enticed me, my desires overpowered me, and my misery aided me in it, and Your veil, which You lowered upon me, deceived me.

Despite Your forbearance and repeated acts of mercy, we continued to sin. Even when You shielded us from public shame and withheld immediate punishment, we persisted in our transgressions. Your apparent disregard for our actions, expressed through delayed consequences, led us to the mistaken and insensitive belief that You had become neglectful.

However, O God, these sins were not committed out of defiance, denial, or hostility toward You. The notion of consciously rejecting, opposing, or challenging our Creator is absurd. We cannot conceive of a human being engaging in arrogance and folly, retorting with, 'You did this, so we will do this in return.' Instead, these transgressions stemmed from our negligence. Witnessing Your abundant mercy and unwillingness to inflict immediate punishment, we misinterpreted Your forbearance as a license to sin. This misconception, born from our shortcomings, led us astray.

This led us to continue sinning out of negligence, not out of defiance or denial of Your Holy Essence, equating ourselves with You, or challenging Your Names and Attributes.

إلهی لم أعصک حین عصیتک و أنا بربوبیّتک جاحد.

A denial of Your divine authority did not drive my transgressions. The notion that I would declare, 'We have no God or Lord, and therefore are free to commit any sin,' is utterly unthinkable. It is not and never has been the case.

وَلا بِأَمْرِكَ مُسْتَخِفٌّ،

Nor did I belittle Your command. You commanded us not to sin, and it is inconceivable that we would have knowingly disobeyed You. We did not belittle Your command; we recognized Your authority.

وَلا لِعُقُوبَتِكَ مُتَعَرِّضٌ،

My transgressions were not committed in court. I am fully aware of Your existence and Your power to inflict retribution. The thought of deliberately sinning further to test the limits of Your punishment is entirely unthinkable. We acknowledge our inability to bear the consequences of Your wrath. Therefore, seeking self-inflicted punishment through sin was never our motivation. We are acutely aware of our limitations and understand the immense pain accompanying Your just punishment.

وَلا لِوَعِيدِكَ مُتَهاوِنٌ،

While we acknowledge the severity of Your warnings regarding Hell, eternal damnation, and other consequences, it is important to clarify that a disregard for Your pronouncements did not drive our transgressions. We recognize the gravity of Your words and do not dismiss them as mere threats. We did not question the veracity of Your warnings by engaging in thoughts like, 'These are simply pronouncements by God. How can we be certain of their truth? Who has truly experienced this fate and returned to share their experience? Who can definitively convey such information?' We intend to emphasize that our transgressions were not motivated by a lack of seriousness regarding your warnings. Why did we sin, then?

لكِنْ خَطيئَةٌ عَرَضَتْ،

An error occurred; a mistake happened.

Fueled by my desires (*nafs*), I found the temptation increasingly appealing. The *nafs* embellished the act, making it seem more attractive and desirable.

The *nafs*, which is ever-present and seek to lead us astray, readily identified this opportunity and urged me to transgress.

وَ غَلَبَنِي هَوايَ،

The desires of my *nafs al-ammarah* (lower self) overpowered me.

وَ أَعانَنِي عَلَيْها شِقْوَتِي،

My inherent misery overcame me.

Understanding that a pure, good, and immaculate essence would never incite one to sin is important. However, we acknowledge that despite the purity of the Most Holy Essence of the Sustainer, all beings possess inherent darkness and limitation within their core. This inherent limitation, arising from the nature of existence and identity, also influenced my transgressions.

The Concealing and Forbearance of the Sustainer in the Face of the Servant's Sins

وَ غَرَّنِي سِتْرُكَ الْمُرْخى عَلَيَّ،

Furthermore, I was misled by the notion that the veil You have drawn over sins protects them from consequence. This assumption led me to believe that You never expose wrongdoings to deter future transgressions.

However, it is crucial to understand that this veil is not meant to shield individuals from accountability. God, in His infinite wisdom, chooses not to expose every sin publicly. Can you recall any instance where God, the Exalted, revealed an individual's hidden transgressions, laying bare their inner self for all to see?

The human mind is a complex realm, harboring both virtuous and sinful thoughts known intimately only to God. Within its depths reside desires, fantasies, and internal conflicts related to sin, greed, illicit activities, and even treachery. The range of human cognition is vast and multifaceted. Consider the chaos that would erupt if God exposed the inner workings of every individual's mind. However, He has chosen to veil these internal realities in His infinite mercy.

While the veil prevents public exposure, it reminds us that God, the All-Knowing, remains fully aware of every person's inner landscape. Even as we interact with others, their outward appearances mask the complex emotions and thoughts beneath the surface.

The late Ayatollah Ansari (may his memory be cherished) used a unique allegory to illustrate the concept of the hidden inner self. He stated, "Imagine two individuals seated side by side, one destined for the highest level of Paradise and the other for the lowest depths of Hell." These individuals remain unaware of each other's ultimate fates despite physical proximity. The one destined for Paradise experiences a state of unimaginable bliss, while the other endures suffering beyond comprehension. Yet, their outward appearances may offer no clue to their internal realities.

This analogy underscores the concept of 'the covering of the Lord.' It refers to the veil that shrouds the inner self, encompassing the soul, inherent tendencies, character traits, and moral compass. This inner realm, from which emanate free will and decision-making, is a product of divine grace, yet its intricacies remain veiled from human understanding by God's design.

While God has graciously bestowed upon us the ability to perceive the external world through various senses, including sight and hearing, He has withheld the capacity to directly access the inner world of others. This interior realm encompasses a complex tapestry of thoughts, desires, and motivations, often harboring elements such as aspirations, ambitions, and even darker impulses like deceit and violence. One could almost liken the human mind to a metaphorical furnace, constantly churning and consuming yet never reaching a state of complete satisfaction.

This inherent opaqueness of the *nafs* is a manifestation of divine wisdom. God, in His infinite knowledge, has chosen to draw a veil over the inner sanctum of each individual.

In stark contrast to the rich tapestry of human history, no prophet, Imam, or divine source has provided insight into another individual's private thoughts. The concept of an inviolable veil protecting the human mind remains a foundational belief.

The Patience of the Lord in the Face of Sins Until the Servant Reaches Pure Actuality

This divine forbearance grants us ample time to reach a state of complete, realized potential. In this ultimate state, potential ceases and is replaced by actualization. Our present world, however, is one of potential, a realm where transformation and positive change are possible. God's love encompasses all His servants, even those harboring impure thoughts and intentions. The possibility of their return to righteousness remains ever-present.

Until the last breath escapes our lungs, our journey is incomplete. Neither should the fortunate succumb to pride in their blessings, nor should the unfortunate lose hope in God's boundless mercy. Indeed, despairing of God's mercy is the most grievous sin,[41] a burden even the most wretched individual cannot bear. If a person, engulfed in profound despair, were to declare, 'I have lost all hope in God's mercy!' the Prophet (peace be upon him) would respond, 'This very despair is a sin! Cast it aside and turn toward God. For through His grace, even your wretchedness can be transformed into blessedness.

Until a person experiences the throes of death, their ultimate fate remains uncertain. Whether they will be among the blessed or the wretched is undetermined. Only at that moment, in the throes of death, does their fate become sealed.

Human existence can be likened to a piece of wax in one's hand. You can shape it into a lion, a leopard, a human, a devil, or a mouse; the possibilities are endless. However, the wax solidifies into cast iron when a person is about to die. Once solidified, its shape cannot be changed. If it has taken the form of a human, it will remain a human; if it has taken the form of a devil, it will remain a devil; and if it has taken the form of an animal, it will remain an animal. This transition marks the shift from the realm of potentiality to the realm of actuality.[42]

The realm of potentiality is a realm where change and transformation are possible. Therefore, until the very last moment of their life, a person possesses free will and choice. They can still say, 'There is no God but Allah,' they can still repent, they can still pray, and they can still turn away from their wrongdoings. This ability to change signifies the presence of potential. When that ability is gone, a person's fate is sealed, and they enter the realm of actuality.

Oh, Divine Being, the veil You have shrouded me in has instilled pride and led me astray. Witnessing the concealment You maintain, we interpreted it as a perpetual state, shielding us from public exposure. We have prioritized the esteem of others over Your judgment. Our actions, be they transgressions or adherence to principles, have been solely driven by the preservation of social standing and the perception of others. Our position, reputation, and being have become contingent upon societal approval. This web of considerations, encompassing societal norms, expediency, and self-interest, has become the sole framework of our existence. In this realm, the veil You have cast fostered a false sense of security, leading us to believe that it would remain eternally in place, emboldening us to persist in these transgressions.

The Necessity of the Sinful Servant to Return Quickly to the Lord and Not Despair of His Mercy

فَقَدْ عَصَيْتُكَ وَ خالَفْتُكَ بِجُهْدى.

Therefore, I sinned and disobeyed. I resisted with all the effort and strength I could muster.

فَالآنَ مِنْ عَذابِكَ مَنْ يَسْتَنْقِذُنى؟

Overcome by fear of potential consequences, I yearn for divine intervention and guidance. Recognizing my transgressions, I acknowledge that they stemmed not from intentional defiance or animosity but rather from human fallibility. Accepting that humans are naturally prone to error, I pledge to promptly rectify my mistakes and avoid delaying the process. Furthermore, I reject the notion of succumbing to despair, reasoning that each sin compounded increases the difficulty of rectifying the situation. The analogy of a drowning individual highlights this principle: while one submerged head can still be saved with minimal intervention, many submerged heads require a significantly greater effort for rescue.

التّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لا ذَنْبَ لَهُ.[43]

The one who repents of sin is like the one who has no sin.

Therefore, immediate repentance is crucial. Fortunately, divine scriptures offer solace, proclaiming that sincere repentance absolves an individual of their transgression.

God Himself says: 'I will erase the page of your mind as if you have never sinned!'

In light of this divine proclamation, what possible objection could we raise?

وَ مِنْ أَيْدِى الْخُصَماءِ غَداً مَنْ يُخَلِّصُنى؟

Who will save me from my enemies tomorrow?

Overcome with fear, I contemplate the potential adversaries I may face hereafter. Recognizing the consequences of my transgressions, I acknowledge that I may have incurred the enmity of various entities. These include the powerful angels, the guardians of Hellfire, and potentially even beings who hold contempt for such transgressions. The possibility of facing their opposition on the Day of Judgment fills me with apprehension. Who would save me on judgment day in the face of these potential adversaries?

و بِحَبْلِ مَنْ أَتَّصِلُ إِنْ أَنْتَ قَطَعْتَ حَبْلَكَ عَنِّي؟

Were You to withdraw Your divine guidance and sever the bond of connection I have with You, what other source of support could I seek? What other foundation could my faith rest upon?

After all, I have no other deity worthy of devotion but You. The only thread that binds me to You is love and devotion. I acknowledge a misstep, and I earnestly seek Your forgiveness. May this lapse in judgment not lead to a complete severing of our connection, nor may it result in facing consequences akin to a judgment of condemnation. Indeed, such an outcome would be a source of profound grief and despair.

The reasons for not despairing of God are hope in His grace, the extent of His mercy, and the prohibition against despair

فَوا سَوْأَتَى عَلَى مَا أَحْصَى كِتَابُكَ مِنْ عَمَلِي الَّذِي لَوْلَا مَا أَرْجُوا مِنْ كَرَمِكَ وَ سَعَةِ رَحْمَتِكَ وَ نَهْيِكَ إِيَّايَ عَنِ الْقُنُوطِ لَقَنَطْتُ عِنْدَمَا أَتَذَكَّرُهَا.

Woe to me for my deeds, as recorded in Your Book! If it were not for my hope in Your grace, the breadth of Your mercy, and Your prohibition against despair, I would despair when I remember them.

Overcome with remorse and regret, I contemplate the record of my actions. Both the divine record and the observable world bear witness to the choices I have made. Recognizing the shortcomings in these actions, I would undoubtedly yield to such despair without the unwavering hope I hold in Your divine grace, the boundless nature of Your mercy, and the clear prohibition against surrendering to despair.

The comprehensiveness of Your record is overwhelming. Were it not for the hope I hold in Your divine grace, the boundless nature of Your mercy, and the clear prohibition against despair, the recollection of my past actions documented therein would undoubtedly lead to despair. However, these three pillars are steadfast anchors, preventing me from perishing in such a state.

The Essence of Human Life Revolves Around Hope in God

Central to the human experience is the concept of hope. Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) highlights the significance of maintaining hope and a positive view of God's mercy in these supplications. Regardless of the number of transgressions one commits, forgiveness remains possible as long as hope persists. Conversely, the loss of hope is likened to shattered ice – irreparable. Hope serves as the bridge connecting humanity to the divine, and its absence severs that vital connection.

Consider an individual trapped within a deep well. A single rope offers their only means of escape. The well is fraught with peril – snakes, scorpions, vipers, dragons, and even water pose significant challenges. Yet, despite the dangers, the individual clings to the rope, a symbol of hope. This lifeline represents their salvation. As long as

they maintain their grip, eventual escape, regardless of the obstacles they face, is a certainty. However, if the rope breaks, the person will immediately fall to their doom. This is why it is so important for humans never to lose hope. Hope is the lifeline that connects us to God; without it, we are lost.

This metaphor of the "rope" signifies the crucial link between humility and dependence on God. It reminds us to always hope in God's grace and cultivate virtues like supplication, humility, and recognizing our limitations. Allowing pride, conceit, or self-admiration to take hold can sever this connection, leading to spiritual downfall.

May the divine source, by its inherent potential, instill and sustain hope within us all. May God guide us toward rectifying our past transgressions, acknowledging them as a potential consequence of our human experience. May He strengthen our sense of purpose and guide us toward growth and positive development. Additionally, may God overlook any shortcomings we may have encountered on this journey.

اللهمّ صلّ على محمّد و آل محمّد.

O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.

Session Fourteen
The Necessity of a Strong Desire to Reach God

أعوذُ باللهِ مِنَ الشَّيطانِ الرَّجيم
بسمِ اللهِ الرَّحمنِ الرَّحيم
و صلَّى اللهُ على محمَّدٍ و آلِهِ الطّاهرين
و لعنةُ اللهِ على أعدائِهِم أجمعين

I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan.
In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
May Allah bless Muhammad and his pure family.
And may the curse of Allah be upon all their enemies.

يا خيرَ مَن دعاهُ داعٍ، و أفضلَ مَن رجاهُ راجٍ! اللهُمَّ بذمَّةِ الإسلامِ أتوسَّلُ إليكَ، و بحرمةِ القرآنِ أعتمِدُ إليكَ، و بحُبِّي النبيَّ الأمّيَّ القرشيَّ الهاشميَّ العربيَّ التهاميَّ المكّيَّ المدنيَّ أرجو الزُّلفةَ لديكَ؛ فلا توحِشِ استيناسَ إيماني! و لا تجعل ثوابي ثوابَ مَن عبَدَ سواكَ!

O the best of those who are called upon, and the most excellent of those who are hoped for! O Allah, by the covenant of Islam, I plead with You, and by the sanctity of the Quran, I rely on You. By my love for the unlettered Prophet, the Qurayshi, the Hashimite, the Arab, the Tihami, the Meccan, the Medinan, I hope for nearness to You; so do not make the companionship of my faith desolate! And do not make my reward the reward of those who have worshipped other than You!

يا خيرَ مَن دعاهُ داعٍ.

O the best of those who are called upon.

The term "Khayr-خير" does not signify "better," contrary to some assertions. It is not derived from the root "Akhyar-أخير" and does not conform to the patterns of "Afḍal-أفضل" or the comparative form "Af'al-أفعل." Rather, it functions as an adjectival noun originating from the root "Khār-خار" meaning "to choose."[44] Hence, "Khayr" denotes "chosen" or "selected."

For instance, the phrase "خيرُ الرّازقين" translates to "the best of providers." This phrase does not imply that Allah is merely "better" than other providers but emphasizes that He is the chosen provider.

In the context of supplication (dua), the expression "يا خيرَ مَن دعاهُ داعٍ" serves as a potent affirmation of Allah's greatness and mercy. It acknowledges that Allah is the best among those who can be invoked for assistance and guidance.

The capital of a believer is three things: the refuge of Islam, trust in the Quran, and love for the Prophet

اللهُمَّ بذمَّةِ الإسلامِ أتوسَّلُ...، و بحرمةِ القرآنِ أعتمِدُ...، و بحُبِّي النبيَّ... أرجو الزُّلفةَ.

The Exalted God, I turn to You now, seeking Your refuge. Islam is my shield, enveloping and protecting me as I strive toward Your closeness. It is the garment and fortress safeguarding me from harm as I seek Your nearness.

The Quran is my guiding light on this path, a source of solid faith. My heart overflows with love for Your Prophet, which fuels my resolute determination to reach this sacred destination. Therefore, I stand before You with three commitments: to embrace Islam's protective embrace, to trust implicitly in the Quran's guidance, and to forever cherish the love for Your Prophet within my heart.

اللهُمَّ بذمَّةِ الإسلامِ أتوسَّلُ إليكَ.

O my Lord, I turn to You seeking refuge in Islam.

Islam is a religion that leads people to the abode of peace. In other words, the abode of peace is found in Islam.[45]

وَ بِحُرمَةِ القُرآنِ أعتَمِدُ إلَیکَ

By the sanctity of the Quran, I turn to You.

By its sanctity," I rely on the Quran's respect, immunity, and infallibility to turn to You. " I rely on the Quran to bring me to You." "And by my love for Your Prophet; the unlettered Prophet, of Quraysh, of Hashim, of Arabia, of Tihamah, of Mecca, of Medina."

Understanding the Term "Unlettered Prophet"

The term "ummi" used to describe Prophet Muhammad has several interpretations. Some argue that "umami" signifies "origin" and, in this context, refers to a prophet with a well-defined lineage connected to the fundamental principles rather than peripheral practices. Another interpretation suggests "ummi" implies the Prophet's Meccan origin, as Mecca holds the title of "Umm al-Qura" (Mother of Cities). This interpretation claims the term "ummi" denotes his birthplace. However, these explanations deviate from the true meaning of "ummi," which translates to "mother" or "maternal."[46]

Therefore, the "umami prophet" is characterized by his maternal connection. This emphasizes that the Prophet's teachings did not originate from formal education or instruction; they stemmed from his inherent nature and relationship with his mother. The analogy parallels a child learning from their mother and the Prophet's innate wisdom and guidance. Consequently, the term "ummi" also alludes to the Prophet's lack of formal education, implying he was not schooled in the traditional sense.

Additionally, the Prophet belonged to the Quraysh tribe, specifically as a Hashim descendant. He identified as Arab and Tihami, the latter referring to a specific region within Arabia. Historically, Arabia was divided into five regions: Tihamah, Hijaz, Yemen, Najd, and A'ruz.[47] Notably, the Prophet was both Meccan and Medinan. He was born in Mecca and remained there until his migration (Hijrah) to Medina. Therefore, he is referred to as "Meccan and Medinan," signifying his birthplace and the city of his migration.

By this prophet who possesses these characteristics, I hope for nearness to You.

أرجُو الزُّلفَةَ لَدَیکَ.

I hope to come closer to You and to find nearness to You.

فَلا تُوحِش استِیناسَ إیمانی.

O God! Do not make my familiarity with faith strange.

O God! Do not make this faith of mine a stranger nor deny it, for I have brought my faith to the level of familiarity!

My faith transcends mere superficiality. A deep, internal conviction has fostered a connection with You, granting me access to Your presence. My words stem from my understanding, grounded in my faith in You, which has nurtured a sense of familiarity in my heart.

Please do not reject this growing connection. Do not cast fear upon my faith. Instead, accept this level of devotion that fosters familiarity. If rejected, my faith would be filled with fear and become directionless, left alone and isolated. Do not abandon this emerging faith; validate, accept, and nurture its growth, allowing it to evolve and strengthen.

وَ لا تَجعَل ثَوابی ثَوابَ مَن عَبَدَ سِواکَ.

O God! Do not make my reward like the reward of those who worship other than You! O God! Grant me a reward to strengthen my steps on this path.

Unlike those who serve entities other than You for worldly gain, comfort, or social advancement, my faith in You transcends mere superficiality. It is deeply rooted and genuine. Therefore, the reward You grant me for this faith should not resemble the fleeting and insignificant rewards others offer in exchange for worship.

Grant me, instead, a reward that reflects the essence and foundation of my devotion. Let it be a lasting and fundamental source of strength, propelling me further on this path.

Types of Faith and Worship of the Servants of God

فإنّ قوماً آمنوا بألسنتهم ليحقنوا به دمائهم، فأدركوا ما أمّلوا؛ و إنّا آمنّا بك بألسنتنا و قلوبنا لتعفو عنّا، فأدرِكنا ما أمّلنا و ثبّت رجائك فی صدورنا.

O God, it has come to pass that certain individuals, tribes, and sects have embraced faith solely for instrumental purposes. They seek to exploit the outward aspects of Islam and the societal advantages granted by the holy religion to those who appear faithful.

Individuals who outwardly profess faith in Islam are considered Muslims by outward appearance. This entails the respect of their person, blood, and property. Additionally, they are granted certain privileges, such as marrying Muslim women, participating in religious activities at mosques, and potentially benefiting from communal resources like the public treasury. These benefits are accorded based on outward adherence, even if the individual's inner faith is not genuine.

Islamic tradition emphasizes the importance of the Shahadah (declaration of faith) as the primary criterion for accepting someone as a Muslim. The individual's internal convictions are not typically scrutinized during the acceptance process. Consequently, even if someone lacks genuine faith but outwardly adheres to Islamic practices, they are still considered Muslim within the community. Therefore, delving into an individual's inner state is not considered necessary for formal acceptance into the faith.[48]

□ Exalted God, certain groups, tribes, and sects have outwardly professed faith by uttering the Shahadah (declaration of faith) solely to secure their safety and protection under the banner of Islam. This was their primary motivation for embracing the religion.

Indeed, their goal was achieved. They embraced Islam to safeguard their lives, and their lives were indeed secured. Islam acknowledged their outward declaration of faith, offering them protection and safety. It is important to understand that their primary purpose in embracing Islam was to attain security under its banner, and based on this intention, their declaration of faith was accepted from that specific perspective.[49]

True faith leads to the forgiveness of sins

True faith leads to the forgiveness of sins, as we firmly believe. O God, our faith extends beyond a simple outward declaration. We have embraced Islam not for its worldly benefits, such as access to the public treasury or participation in communal activities. Our belief transcends the desire for a Muslim burial or social acceptance. We have embraced Islam with our hearts, seeking a deeper connection with You and attaining a closer station and proximity to You. This sincere faith, we believe, will lead to the expiation of our inner transgressions and the forgiveness of our sins. After all, the essence of faith lies in seeking Your forgiveness. Therefore, we implore You to fulfill this aspiration we hold dear.[50]

Unlike those who sought only the outward aspects of Islam for safety and security, our faith is rooted in a deeper purpose. We seek Your forgiveness, purification, and a place among the righteous. With this sincere intention, we plead with You to overlook our shortcomings and grant us entry to Your sacred sanctuary. We have placed our hope in You, for You are the best of those called upon and the most excellent source of hope. How could You then disappoint us in this faith we have embraced with such fervent hope and expectation?

خیر مَن دَعاهُ داعٍ و أفضلَ مَن رَجاهُ راجٍ.

You embody *faḍl* (excellence), surpassing all others in whom hope is placed.

O God, establish our hope in our hearts.

فأدرِکنا ما أمّلنا؛

Give us what we hope for.

و ثَبِّت رَجائکَ فی صُدورِنا.

Seal the hope we have for you in our hearts and make it firm.

We implore you, Divine One, to prevent the erosion of our faith. When our hopes remain unfulfilled for extended periods, a seed of doubt can take root, potentially blossoming into suspicion and despair. We yearn not to fall prey to the cynicism that whispers, "Even the God we trust leads us astray, offering promises perpetually unkept – tomorrow, next month, next year... a cycle that extends to our very last breath." Please grant us the strength to maintain a solid faith.

و ثَبِّت رَجائکَ.

Grant us unwavering hope," we beseech you. "May this hope we hold within us for You flourish, ever more vibrant and enduring. Just as a devoted gardener cultivates a flower, meticulously removing withered leaves, providing daily hydration, and enriching the soil – so too tend to the hope we nurture in our hearts. Nurture it, Lord, that it may become ever stronger and more verdant.

ربنا لا تزغ قلوبنا بعد اذ هديتنا.

Our Lord do not let our hearts deviate after You have guided us. (Quran, 3:8)

Having guided us and led us to this sacred place, O Divine Source, do not allow our hearts to be swayed by the fleeting promises and allurements of the world. Shield us from the allure of its hopes and desires, the despair it can bring, and all that seeks to distract us from Your presence.[51]

This is deviation, inclination, and deflection.

لا تزغ قلوبنا.

Do not turn our hearts away; after You have guided us, do not give us the inclination to anything other than You from Yourself!

وهب لنا من لدنك رحمه.[52]

Bestow upon us, Divine Source, from Your boundless generosity.[53] Forgive us, O Lord! Grant us Your mercy directly, not through any intermediary. May we be ever-recipients of Your Ladunnī mercies, those graces that emanate from Your very essence.

وعلمناه من لدنا علماً.

We taught him knowledge from Ourselves. (Quran, 18:65)

The Meaning of ʿIlm Ladunnī

ʿIlm Ladunnī refers to knowledge that originates from the divine realm and resides with God (Allah). The word "ladun" signifies "nearness" or "presence," emphasizing

that this knowledge isn't attainable through conventional human learning methods. It's a direct gift or infusion from God bestowed upon chosen individuals.[54]

انک انت الو هاب.[55]

Indeed. You are the Giver of all bounties.

"إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْوَهَّابُ" (innaka anta al-wahhab) can be translated to, "Verily, You are the Most Generous Giver." This translation emphasizes God's role as the ultimate provider using several key elements: Emphasis Particle: "Verily" translates "إِنَّ" (inna) and strengthens the declaration. Nominal Sentence: The structure mirrors the original Arabic, focusing on God ("You") as the Giver ("the Most Generous Giver") rather than the action of giving itself. Separate Pronoun: "You" translates the separate pronoun "أَنتَ" (anta), placing distinct emphasis on God. Definite Article: "The Most Generous Giver" translates "الْوَهَّابُ" (al-wahhab) with the definite article "ال" (al), signifying God as the unique and ultimate source of generosity.

فوعِزَّتِکَ لَوِ انْتَهَرْتَنی ما بَرِحْتُ مِن بابِکَ، و لا کَفَفْتُ عَن تَمَلُّقِکَ؛ لِما اُلهِمَ قَلْبی مِنَ المَعرِفَةِ بِکَرَمِکَ و سَعَةِ رَحمَتِکَ.

By Your glory, even if You drove me away, I would not leave Your door, nor would I cease to flatter You because of what has been inspired in my heart by the knowledge of Your generosity and the breadth of Your mercy.

O God, by Your glory and majesty, I swear that there is no one else between You and us that we consider. Now, apart from all these words, by Your glory, I swear that even if You drive us away, we will not leave the door of this house!

By Your infinite glory, O God, I would not depart from Your threshold even if You were to turn me away. There is no other refuge for me, no door, but Yours can offer solace. Even Your seeming rejection, I understand, manifests Your kindness and generosity, a form of guidance You employ with Your servants. I swear by Your Majesty, I will remain at Your doorstep, forever seeking Your presence.

Upon expulsion from Paradise, as decreed by God, Satan declared with defiance:

فبعزتك لأغوينهم أجمعين.

By Your glory, I will surely lead them all astray. (Quran, 38:82)

He then elaborated on his vengeful intent, stating that his exile wouldn't be his sole act. He vowed to actively mislead God's servants, becoming a persistent obstacle on their righteous paths. However, one with a genuine connection to God and a foundation of faith in truth declares: By Your infinite glory, I will persevere even if You were to turn me away. A thousand rejections will not deter me. If barred from one entrance, I will seek another. Should all doors be closed, I will still find a way, circling this sacred space as pilgrims do around the Kaaba, even though its interior may be inaccessible.

و لا کَفَفْتُ عَن تَمَلُّقِکَ.

I will not stop flattering You, from flattering Your holy station, from constantly preparing and presenting myself, begging and asking, and throwing myself into sycophancy.

It is very good for a person to ask firmly! The core of one's spiritual journey lies in this unwavering determination.[56] The stronger one's will, the greater the progress to You. However, a weak approach will lead to a scattered approach, yielding no true progress.

To achieve success, steady resolve is vital. One's desire must be resolute.[57] They must declare, "O God, I desire this!" and persevere relentlessly. This desire acts as the cornerstone upon which the edifice of one's ambitions is built. As you know, a sturdy

foundation allows for the construction of towering structures, even reaching eighty stories. Conversely, a weak foundation renders even a single story vulnerable to collapse with the slightest tremor.

المُؤمِنُ كالجَبَلِ الرّاسِخِ لا تُحَرِّكُهُ العَواصِفُ.[58]

The believer is like a firm mountain that is not shaken by storms.

I have witnessed the aftermath of a powerful storm near Hamedan, Iran. Unaware of the event, I arrived by car to find tilted telegraph poles and other damaged structures. Upon reaching the city, I learned of the storm's devastation, including lifting factory roofs and tossing buses. The storm, however, left the majestic Mount Alvand untouched despite its ferocity.

The True Will and Determination of a Person is the Key to Their Progress

المؤمِنُ كالجَبَلِ الرّاسِخِ.
كالجَبَلِ الوند أو أشَدّ.

The believer is like a firm mountain, like Mount Alvand or even stronger.

Authentic commitment to one's pursuits is essential. The All-powerful can remove obstacles when a person possesses true will and desire. However, a lack of genuine desire leads to setbacks. Faced with challenges, one who lacks this will tend to retreat repeatedly, ultimately succumbing to discouragement and stagnation. Alternatively, they might become fixated on unconstructive thoughts and fantasies and unable to move forward. As the Quran reminds us: "And what they used to invoke has gone astray from them."

وضل عنهم ما كانوا يدعون.[59]

Unwavering will and determination are the keys to achievement. The stronger this resolve, the greater the likelihood of success. Those who doubt or question the divine plan may encounter significant obstacles. Accepting the will of a higher power can provide solace and a sense of direction.

All living things strive for their own continued existence. Those seeking a deeper connection with a transcendent reality must be prepared to relinquish attachments to the material world. This path requires immense dedication and a willingness to transcend even established spiritual concepts. The person who seeks God must be willing to let go of everything, even the angels.

من که ملول گشتمی از نفس فرشتگان
قیل و مقال عالمی میکشم از برای تو.[60]

Having grown weary, the angels invite humans to have companionship and intimacy with them within their very existence. However, humans are not in a state to converse with angels. The human wishes to pass on, but the angels obstruct and detain them.

A Narrative on the Believer's Disregard for Anything Other Than God

In Islamic tradition, there exists a narrative that exemplifies the faithful's devotion to God. It demonstrates their disregard for worldly pleasures and their focus on the ultimate reward of the afterlife.

The narrative recounts the story of a devout individual who, upon reaching the celestial realm, is presented with the captivating beauty and allure of the houris, the heavenly maidens of paradise. Despite the immense temptation these celestial beauties pose, the steadfast believer remains unmoved, their heart and mind solely set on the ultimate bliss of attaining God's presence.

As the houris attempt to entice the devout individual, their persistent advances prove futile. The individual, firm in their devotion, remains unfazed, their focus on God overriding worldly desires.

In a dramatic turn of events, the devout individual's steadfastness results in the houris' hands being severed, a symbolic representation of their inability to sway the believer's commitment to God.

The narrative concludes with a poignant image: the houris, still holding their heavenly goblets of wine, remain in a state of perpetual longing, their desire for the believer's attention forever unrequited.[61]

Despite the houris' captivating beauty and enticing presence, the believer's heart remains unmoved, their gaze fixed solely on attaining God's presence.

ولا كَفَفتُ عَن تَمَلُّقِكَ لِما أُلهِمَ قَلبِی مِنَ المَعرِفَةِ بِکَرَمِکَ، وسَعَةِ رَحمَتِکَ.

I will not cease supplicating You, for my heart has been inspired by Your generosity and mercy.

I have understood that there is a God whose mercy is vast; therefore, I shall never cease, for I desire vast mercy. I cannot cover up this knowledge of mine, and I cannot pretend to be ignorant and feign ignorance. So when I perceive your grace and vast mercy, I will not let go! Even if You expel me from a thousand doors, I will enter from another.

دست از طلب ندارم تا کام من برآید
یا تن رسد به جانان یا جان ز تن برآید
بگشای تربتم را بعد از وفات و بنگر
کز آتش درونم دود از کفن برآید.[62]

I shall not cease my quest until my wish is sealed,
Either my form meets the beloved, or my soul from the form is healed.
Unveil my grave when I am gone, and witness, if you may,
From the fire within my soul, smoke from my shroud will sway.

The very root of my being is intertwined with Your love, O God.

Ḥāfiẓ Shīrāzī, may God's mercy be upon him, says: "If I cast my heart away from you and remove love for you from it, upon whom shall I place that love, and where shall I place that heart?"

گر بر فکنم دل از تو و بردارم از تو مهر
آن مهر بر که افکنم، آن دل کجا کنم.63

In another place, he says: Your love is in my mind, and your affection is in my heart; it came into my body with milk and will leave with my soul.

عشق تو در سر و مهر تو در دلم
با شیر در بدن شد و با جان به در رود.[64]

Ḥāfiẓ says: This love of yours entered my body with my mother's milk and will leave with my soul. When a person's essence is molded with your love, entering with milk and departing with the soul, how can I possibly let go?!

The late Qazi, may God's mercy be upon him, suggests that Ḥāfiẓ may have shown weakness in his expression. The implication is that the verse might be a somewhat simplistic representation of divine love since Ibn al-Farid declares: Even before my existence came into being, a state of intoxication, attraction, love, and passionate devotion towards the Holy Essence of the Lord already existed within me.

وعنديَ منها نَشوَةٌ قبلَ نشأتي
مَعِی ابَدًا تَبقَی وإن بَلِیَ العَظمُ.[65]

This love did not originate with my physical nourishment. 'With me, it shall forever remain, even if my bones should crumble,' he proclaims.

The builders of this mosque employed various materials for the mortar, ensuring its longevity against the elements. Yet, Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) offers a profound reflection: "When my being was molded," he states, "it was shaped with Your love." If love for the divine is the very essence of our creation, how can we even conceive of loving anything else? The foundation of our existence is interwoven with this love, making it impossible to imagine a separate object of affection. Our capacity for imagination itself stems from this inherent love.

إلیٰ مَن یذهَبُ العَبدُ إلاّ إلیٰ مَولاهُ، و إلیٰ مَن یلتَجی المَخلوقُ إلاّ إلیٰ خالقِه..

O God, where else can a servant turn but to the Master? A runaway servant, no matter the distance traveled, remains an outsider. The inherent connection to their source cannot be severed. Even in escape, they exchange one authority for another. Likewise, where can a creation find its ultimate purpose except by returning to its maker?

Manly hope and trust in the path of God

إلهی لو قرَنتَنی بِالأصفادِ، و منَعتَنی سَیبَکَ مِن بینِ الأشهادِ، و دَلَلتَ علیٰ فَضائحی عُیونَ العِبادِ، و أمَرتَ بی إلَی النّارِ، و حُلتَ بَینی و بَینَ الأبرارِ، ما قَطَعتُ رَجائی مِنکَ و ما صرَفتُ تَأمیلی لِلعَفوِ عَنکَ و لا خَرَجَ حُبُّکَ مِن قَلبی.

My Lord and Sustainer, I would never lose faith in Your ultimate mercy even if faced with the most severe consequences – physical confinement, public disgrace, and eternal punishment. Even in the face of hardship, my trust represents the pinnacle of my hope. We can all strive to cultivate such a strong and enduring faith. Even if You condemned me to the fire, cast Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) into the flames alongside me, and erected an impassable barrier between me and the righteous, I would never abandon hope in Your mercy. O God, even if you take away my honor, I will not give up on you.

The man who seeks to reconcile love with God and base his work on love faces a dilemma. If his beloved embraces those morally compromised and considered outsiders by God's standards and exposes the man's past transgressions, his entire endeavor will be shattered. He will likely plead with God to avoid the topic.

O God, my devotion and reliance on You are boundless. Even if You expose my flaws to all Your servants, my love for You will not waver. Could any commitment be stronger? Even if You condemn me to Hell, You are still my refuge. Even if You separate me from the righteous, You remain my sole source of solace. Even if You subject me to imprisonment for years, as You did Musa bin Jaafar (peace be upon him), my faith in You will not be shaken. I yearned for spiritual experiences, but You have chosen a different path for me. You have withheld the blessings bestowed upon others, and I stand before You empty-handed. Yet, despite these trials, "I have not severed my hope in You."

ما قَطَعتُ رَجائی مِنکَ.

My devotion remains unwavering.

Amir Al-Mu'minin in dua' Kumayl states:

و جَمَعتَ بَینی و بَینَ أهلِ بَلائِکَ و فَرَّقتَ بَینی و بَینَ أحِبّائِکَ، و هَبنی یا إلهی صَبَرتُ علیٰ عَذابِکَ فَکیفَ أصبِرُ علیٰ فِراقِکَ.

O God, if You cast me into the Fire, burn me, and gather me together with the people of Your calamity and separate me from Your beloved ones, and grant me, O my

God, patience to endure Your punishment, then how can I be patient with Your separation?

فَهَبنی یا إلهی صَبَرتُ علی حَرِّ نارِکَ فکیفَ أصبِرُ عَنِ النَّظَرِ إلی کرامَتِکَ.

Suppose I can be patient with the pain of Your punishment, then how can I be patient with the absence of Your love?

In this context, the motivation for fulfilling one's religious obligations transcends the principle of presumption of innocence. While *fuqahā'* (Islamic jurists) often cite the injustice of punishment without prior warning, as evidenced by the hadith 'People are at ease as long as they do not know' and the Qur'anic verse 'We would not punish until We send a messenger,' a higher principle comes into play.

النّاسُ فی سَعَةٍ ما لا یَعلَمونَ.[66] و (وما کنا معذبین حتی نبعث رسولا).[67]

Here, the concept of punishment is superseded by love and devotion. The motivation for action is not the fear of retribution but rather the desire to align oneself with the divine will. Therefore, the principle of 'the ugliness of punishment without warning' becomes inapplicable. Love, not fear, dictates conduct in these advanced spiritual stages.

Those who haven't reached these stages may struggle to grasp this concept. For them, the principle of presumption of innocence holds weight, particularly within the framework of 'the ugliness of punishment without warning.' However, the guiding principle becomes divine approval for those who have attained higher spiritual levels. Their actions are solely governed by the pursuit of what they believe is sanctioned by the divine, regardless of external pronouncements or the absence of explicit commandments. This is a profound concept best kept within the confines of personal contemplation.

امَّلَ یؤَمِّلُ تأمیلاً.

To harbor hope is to possess a fervent desire. My hope rests entirely with You, unwavering like a loyal steed I have brought and presented at Your doorstep. Its reins are firmly secured to the ring of Your abode. How could I contemplate diverting this hope elsewhere, even amid immense trials? No burden You may place upon me could sever this connection.

In short:

ما قَطَعتُ رَجائی مِنکَ؛

I will never lose hope in You, O Lord!

و ما صَرَفتُ تأمیلی لِلعَفوِ عَنکَ

I will never take back the hope I have placed in You, and I will never turn away from Your door to the door of another.

و لا خَرَجَ حُبُّکَ مِن قَلبی.

Your love will never leave my heart.

[إلهی] أنا لا أنسیٰ أیادیکَ عِندی.

O God! I will never forget the favors You have bestowed upon me, which are still with me.

[O God], I am deeply grateful for the abundance of Your generosity. I recognize and appreciate the past blessings You have bestowed upon me and the ongoing and future opportunities that lie ahead. These will never be forgotten, for as Your devoted follower, such gratitude is an ever-present part of my being.

و سترک علیّ فی دار الدّنیا.

I can never forget the veil that You have covered my apparent and inner flaws.

I always see that veil covering and surrounding my entire being, and it is always before my eyes. How can I forget You?

You are my Lord. You brought me into existence from non-existence and blessed me with many blessings. You have given me all the blessings and covered up all my shortcomings! So, should I take the love of You out of my heart and throw it to someone else? Where is the other? What is the other?

سیّدی أخرج حبّ الدّنیا من قلبی.

My Master, remove the love of the world from my heart!

The distractions hinder my spiritual progress. They include fleeting moments of forgetfulness, worldly desires, ambitions, familial bonds, professional pursuits, social interactions, and the influence of others. I implore You to remove these attachments entirely from my heart.

و اجمع بینی و بین المصطفی و آله، خیرتک من خلقک و خاتم النّبیّین محمّد صلّی الله علیه و آله.

Unite me with the Chosen One among Your creation, the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad (may God bless him and his family).

May I always be with them! These pure, purified, clean, and immaculate beings have been chosen from among the worlds and approved by You. Unite me with the Chosen Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets, and the family of the Chosen One, upon whom and his family be peace, so that we may always be with them and not be without them for a moment!

و انقلنی إلی درجة التوبة إلیک.

Raise me to the station of repentance to You.

May my eyes continuously be fixed on Your holy station, and I forever return to You with my nafs. May I never hesitate in my movement toward You, which is repentance and return, and may I always be on a spiritual journey?[68]

و أعنّی بالبکاء علی نفسی.

Help me to weep for my nafs!

I am weeping but help me! This commanding soul has hurt and tired me. It has broken my back and shoulders. It puts heavy burdens on me. It separates me from my Beloved. It constantly wants to bring me closer to the world of pride. Truly, one must weep for this nafs and say, 'O God, help me!'

فقد أفنیت بالتّسویف و الآمال عمری.

I have wasted my life on procrastination and wishful thinking.

Despite repeated resolutions to engage in good deeds each day, I consistently postponed them. Promises of "tomorrow" became a recurring refrain, a pattern of procrastination that ultimately led me to this point in life.[69] Now, the long-held aspirations I once cherished weigh heavily on my heart.

و قد نزلت منزلة الآیسین من خیری.

I have reached the state of those devoid of goodness, as I see myself among those concerned with their good, not yours!

فَمَنْ يَكُونُ أَسْوَءَ حالاً مِنّي إِنْ أَنا نُقِلْتُ عَلَى مِثْلِ حالي إِلى قَبْرِي.

Who could be in a worse state than me if I am transferred to my grave in such a condition?

My love for you is so strong that I cannot let go and turn to anyone but you. When I look at my inner self, I see it has no good qualities either. However, since I love you, what should I do?

While individuals may not express affection toward you, they are preoccupied with their pursuits. Some find fulfillment in their relationships, whether with a spouse, child, or colleague. Others derive satisfaction from their work or material possessions. Regardless of the object of their passion, most people find themselves engrossed in these activities, remaining unaware of or uninterested in a greater truth. This engagement brings them a sense of contentment.

Perhaps happiness exists free from pain, worry, or complex thought - a simple, unburdened joy. Nevertheless, Oh, Divine One! You have bestowed upon us a profound affliction – the pangs of love and affection. This relentless yearning disrupts our slumber, both at night and by day. It persists during every waking moment, whether we eat, work, rest, or engage in devotion. The intensity of this longing only grows, yet we lack the knowledge to find solace. Only Your guidance can lead us through this labyrinth. We yearn to act, to channel this yearning into deeds of service and righteousness, but despair overwhelms us. We find nothing but emptiness within ourselves. Goodness seems utterly absent. Thus, amidst this turmoil and inner struggle, only You remain a beacon of hope, a refuge to which I turn in absolute desperation.

Session Fifteen
The Necessity of Acquiring Divine Love Through Righteous Action

أعوذُ بالله مِنَ الشَّيطانِ الرَّجيم
بِسمِ اللهِ الرَّحمنِ الرَّحيم
و صلَّى اللهُ عَلىٰ محمَّدٍ و آلِهِ الطَّاهرين
و لَعنةُ اللهِ عَلىٰ أعدائِهِم أجمعين.

I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan.
In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
May Allah bless and grant peace upon Muhammad and his pure family.
And may the curse of Allah be upon all their enemies.

فَمَن يَكونُ أسوءَ حالاً مِنّی؟! إن أنا نُقِلتُ عَلىٰ مِثلِ حالی إلیٰ قَبری، لَم أُمَهِّدْهُ لِرَقدَتی و لَم أفرُشْهُ بِالعَمَلِ الصّالِحِ لِضَجعَتی! و ما لی لا أبکی و لا أدری إلیٰ ما یَکونُ مَصیری؟! و أریٰ نَفسی تُخادِعُنی و أیّامی تُخاتِلُنی و قَد خَفَقَت عِندَ رَأسی أجنِحَةُ المَوتِ، فَما لی لا أبکی؟

In the previous sentence, Imam said:

و أعِنّی بِالبُکاءِ عَلیٰ نَفسی، فَقَد أفنَیتُ بِالتَّسویفِ و الآمالِ عُمری، و قَد نَزَلتُ مَنزِلَةَ الآیِسینَ مِن خَیری.

O God, help me to cry for myself, for I have wasted my life in procrastination and wishful thinking. I have now reached the state of those who have despaired of their good!

O God, help me to cry for myself, for this soul of mine has caused me great loss and ruin. My entire life has been spent on procrastination and negligence.[70] I have also wasted my life on hopes, dreams, and fantasies.

I find myself in a state of deep despair. Years of procrastination and wishful thinking have left me with nothing to show for my life. I recognize that I have wasted my potential, and this realization has plunged me into a profound sense of hopelessness.

Therefore, I turn to you, O God. Blinded by my failings, I see no good within myself. Grant me the strength to lament my wasted potential, this soul that has led me down a path of regret, loss, and suffering. My soul desperately needs this catharsis, for it is truly unfortunate and utterly helpless.

Regret and remorse are the result of putting things off until tomorrow

فَمَن يَكونُ أسوءَ حالاً مِنّی؟! إن أنا نُقِلتُ عَلىٰ مِثلِ حالی إلیٰ قَبری، لَم أُمَهِّدْهُ لِرَقدَتی و لَم أفرُشْهُ بِالعَمَلِ الصّالِحِ لِضَجعَتی.

Is there anyone more wretched than I? My life has been consumed by procrastination, indecision, and idle contemplation, all while I nurtured unrealistic hopes and fantasies. I yearn to leave this stage and be carried to my final resting place. But who could be considered more miserable if I am transferred to the grave unprepared, without having made any provisions for my legacy?

My life is over, and the opportunity to act has vanished. There's no time left to prepare for what lies beyond. My life, squandered on delays and wishful thinking, leaves me empty-handed. The bitter fruit of my choices is an overwhelming sense of regret and remorse.

لَم أُمَهِّدْهُ لِرَقدَتی.

I have not prepared that grave for me to sleep in.

و لَم أفرُشْهُ بِالعَمَلِ الصّالِحِ لِضَجعَتی.

I have not furnished that grave with any good deeds so that I may rest and relax here.

Imagine seeking a place to sleep. In the desert, you'd clear thorns and stones, ensuring the ground is dry and free of dangers. Only then would you lay down your rug.

Similarly, I approach the grave. Yet, I haven't prepared it. How can I rest here? True preparation comes not from external comforts but from good deeds. A physical mat is irrelevant.

The shroud respects the body, but ultimately, placing someone naked in the grave or at sea makes little difference. The true resting place, the barzakh (intermediate realm), lies beyond. Decorating this earthly grave is futile. The physical body will decay. Bones will separate, turn to dust, and rejoin the earth. This concerns the physical shell.

The true challenge lies in the world of forms (ālam al-mithāl) that await. Here, in the ālam al-sūrat, punishment and reward for one's deeds manifest. This realm demands preparation.

Farsh means both "grave" and "carpet" in the context of this world, which is woven from good deeds. A life filled with virtuous acts creates a beautiful and comforting abode in the barzakh. The body becomes a barzakhi form, experiencing the fruits of its earthly actions.[71]

Now, if I am carried to my grave with no good deeds to my name, how can I avoid weeping for myself? How can I find peace in the afterlife?

God, I implore you to grant me the tears to lament my nafs. It is burdened with a lifetime of regret and wasted potential. All my life, I clung to hopes and indulged in procrastination. Now, on the cusp of departure, I have prepared nothing for my eternal resting place.

و ما لی لا أبکی؟!

And why shouldn't I cry?! (I am worthy of crying, and my being is filled with tears!)

و لا أدری إلیٰ ما یکونُ مَصیری.

And I don't know what my fate will be?! (I don't know where they are taking us and where my destination and return will be?!)

There is significant uncertainty regarding the next stage of the process. The lack of information about the destination and the unknown nature of the environment are causing considerable anxiety and apprehension.

و أریٰ نَفسی تُخادِعُنی.

I am becoming aware of the deception of the nafs. It continues to present me with alluring but ultimately false promises. Despite recognizing this pattern, I am tempted by its illusions once more.

Throughout my life, I have been misled by procrastination and wishful thinking. This internal struggle has deceived me countless times. Even now, with this awareness, my nafs persist in presenting worldly enticements. It dangles the prospects of leadership, status, and prestige before me. In essence, it fosters worldly desires within me, disguising them as attractive and desirable. This internal conflict (nafs) is the current state of my being.

و أیّامی تُخاتِلُنی.

And my days deceive me.

These days, the world accepts me and comes to me with deceit, trickery, and pride.

و قَد خَفَقَت عِندَ رَأسی أجنحةُ المَوت..

While the wings of death are flowing around my head!

A pervasive sense of impending doom engulfs me. It feels as if the very harbinger of death circles ever closer, its dark wings brushing against my head. This feeling intensifies with each passing moment, relentless in its assault. Despite the perilous situation, my desires (or ego) play a deceptive game. It offers fleeting moments of comfort and enticing visions of worldly pleasures while attempting to erode my commitment to truth. This internal struggle is unceasing, a constant push and pull within my soul.

فَما لی لا أبکی؟

Why should I not weep?

When I take account of myself and see that the record of my deeds is such, then I am worthy of weeping! Why should I not weep at all? The very essence of my current state is weeping. If I do not weep, it is contrary to the principle. Joy and happiness are not the principle for me, and weeping is an extraneous matter that befalls me as an accident or occurrence. This is not the case! Now that I have taken account of myself and my situation is such, the primary principle concerning me demands to weep, and anyone who sees me laughing should be surprised!

The late Sāhib al-Ma'ālim, who was a great Muslim jurist and the son of Shahīd al-Thanī, says:

عَجِبتُ و ما عَجِبتُ لِكلِّ ذی‌عَینٍ قَریرَة
و أمامَهُ یَومٌ عَظیمٌ فیهِ یَنکَشِفُ السَّریرَة
هذا، و إن ذَکَرَ ابنُ آدمَ ما یُلاقی فی الحَفیرَة
بَکیٰ مِن هَولِ ذلِکَ مُدَّةَ العُمُرِ الطَّویلَة[72]

I am amazed by those cool, calm eyes with no sorrow, heat, or anxiety; how can these eyes find peace and freshness in the world?!
While they see before them a day when the secrets and hidden things of the mind and the intentions of the heart will be revealed, and the veil will be lifted from them!
If the son of Adam knew what would happen to him in the grave and what he would encounter.
It would be enough for him to cry constantly throughout his long life.

The moment of death is the time of the final act of every human being and the sealing of their book of deeds

فَما لی لا أبکی؟
أبکی لِخُروجِ نَفسی!

Why should I not weep?

I weep because my soul is about to depart, and I am about to die! Once the nafs leaves the body, it is all over!

While humans possess remarkable potential to achieve great things, accumulate wealth and influence, and overcome challenges, this power is ultimately limited to the material world and their lifespan. This ability to change and evolve, transforming oneself from one state to another, allows for ongoing cultivation and shaping of one's character in diverse ways.

The world presents a stage for expressing human potential, gifted by a higher power. However, the physical body, a material entity bound by time and space, is subject to decay and death. We transition from potentiality to actuality throughout life under the influence of the world's ongoing cycle. This process culminates in mortality, with a final breath signifying the end. A person's life is then sealed by their deeds, marking the completion of their journey. This state of completion can be termed "actuality."

The concept of aptitude is absent within the realm of Barzakh. This is logical, for Barzakh represents a world of abstraction and imaginative forms (distinct from mere fanciful creations). It encompasses the faculty of imagination and the realm of form, which we designate as mithāl and khayāl. It is abstract and immaterial and exists as a state of pure actuality.[73] Here, the consequences of one's actions in the material world are fully realized.

اليَوم عَمَلٌ و لا حِسابٌ، و غَدًا حِسابٌ و لا عَمَلٌ.[74]

Today is a day of action, not reckoning. Tomorrow is a day of reckoning, not action.

In this world, a person's fate remains perpetually open. Certainty regarding one's eternal destination, Paradise or Hell, is unattainable. Even those seemingly destined for Hell may achieve redemption through a single virtuous act, while those seemingly destined for Paradise may fall through a single transgression. The capacity for change and transformation underpins this reality.

An analogy can be drawn to a goldsmith entrusted with a piece of gold. The owner instructs the craftsman, "Fashion this gold into any form you see fit by a specific date, for it will be reclaimed on that day. The design and execution are entirely at your discretion."

The goldsmith may choose to craft a ring on the first day, only to deconstruct it the next and reshape it as a brooch. Subsequently, it might be transformed into an earring or melted into a simple bar. Alternatively, the craftsman might meticulously refine the gold over a month, polishing it daily until the retrieval date. Upon collection, the owner declares, "It is complete!" The goldsmith pleads for a final moment to provide a final polish, but the owner insists, "The work is finished. " The state of the gold reflects your efforts to date.

In a similar vein, the concept of the nafs can be understood. As long as humans possess a physical body, they can mold their nafs in various ways. This is due to the inherent formlessness of the human nafs. Its form is contingent upon an individual's intentions and actions. Each virtuous deed undertaken by a person refines the shape of their nafs, while each misdeed has a transformative effect. This distinction is significant. Just as physical appearances vary amongst people, so too do their spiritual and angelic essences. The angelic essence of each individual is unique, reflecting the cumulative impact of their actions.

The human nafs possesses the inherent capacity to attain divine perfection

النَّفسُ هَيولانِيَّةٌ.

Islamic scholars describe the nafs as "hylomorphic," signifying its initial state of pure potentiality.[75] It is a blank slate that can be shaped through actions and choices. Good deeds, righteous intentions, charitable acts, jihad (struggle) in God's way, self-sacrifice, and the greater jihad (inner struggle) all cultivate and refine the nafs, allowing it to acquire a virtuous human form.

However, if someone directs their nafs down a different path, it will take on a corresponding form. This transformation, though real, may remain hidden from the individual's conscious awareness.

The earthly realm is primarily one of appearances, where the material world veils the true essence of things. Therefore, we judge others based on their outward behavior. In the afterlife, the opposite occurs. The veil is lifted, revealing the true form shaped by the nafs during one's earthly life.

In essence, the potentials inherent within the nafs can be cultivated and directed toward divine perfections, or they can be neglected and lead to a different outcome. Our choices in this life ultimately determine the form the nafs take in the hereafter.

The return of actuality to potentiality is rationally impossible

Potentiality is no longer valid after actuality. Something that has become actualized can no longer return to the stage of potentiality.

A seed has the potential to become an apple tree. A person plants and takes care of it constantly until it becomes an apple tree. When it becomes an apple, it has become actualized. However, the apple can no longer move and return to being a seed and retrace its path. This is impossible. It is impossible to go back from actuality to potentiality.

A human being comes from the mother's womb, grows up, ages, and goes into the grave. They can't go back to the womb of the mother and go to 'ālam dhar (the world of pre-existence or a realm in Islamic eschatology where souls are said to exist before being born into the world). A person goes from youth to old age, but it is impossible to go from old to youth. This is because the stages passed from youth to old age have actualized potentiality, and it is impossible to go from actuality to potentiality.

As you sit here now, you possess a specific level of intellectual knowledge. This knowledge represents the culmination of your past efforts, studies, and education. It is your current state of realization.

This knowledge also serves as a springboard for further progress. Because it is not absolute actuality, it holds the potential to be actualized into a higher level of understanding. You can build upon your existing knowledge to reach new intellectual heights.

However, regression is not an option. It is impossible to deliberately diminish your knowledge base to a point of complete naivety, akin to a child's state. This inherent progression of knowledge underscores the value of continuous learning.

The impossibility of reversing actuality back to potentiality serves as a powerful argument against the concept of reincarnation.

Reincarnation posits that upon death, the soul transmigrates into another body. Proponents of this belief suggest that a happy soul will inhabit the body of a virtuous individual, while an unhappy soul will be reborn into a wicked person. For instance, the soul of Yazid, a historical figure associated with cruelty, would be reborn in another unhappy person, potentially even Pharaoh.

However, this theory is demonstrably flawed. On the day of death, a person's soul achieves a state of actuality. Philosophical reasoning dictates that this actuality cannot be negated and re-entered twice.

The soul that enters a new body does so in the form of a baby, a being of pure potentiality. This "potentiality" progresses through distinct stages: from a fertilized egg to a zygote, a blood clot, a developing skeleton, a complete fetus, and finally, a newborn infant. This developmental process continues throughout life.

If death occurs at any point during this journey, the soul possesses a specific actuality. Regaining this actuality to a state of pure potentiality is philosophically impossible twice. Therefore, reincarnation is fundamentally implausible based on this argument.[76]

Now the Imam (peace be upon him) says: Why should I not weep?

أبكی لخُروج نفسی.

I weep because my soul is departing!"

Failure to contemplate the consequences of one's actions can indicate a lack of self-awareness

Death signifies the completion of our earthly endeavors. In this light, there is a compelling argument for reflection. However, many of us may not engage in such contemplation due to a limited understanding of our mortality. A profound understanding of death's finality could generate significant anxiety regarding the

concept of completing one's work.[77] After all, our actions and their impact become a permanent record upon death.

Similar to how unfired clay possesses the potential to be molded into various forms – bricks, pots, bowls – a human being exists in a state of potentiality. This potentiality allows individuals to develop and shape their lives in diverse ways. However, upon death, a transformation occurs, analogous to the firing of clay into a brick. This transformation signifies the transition from potentiality to actuality; the individual's life journey becomes fixed and unalterable. Just as a broken brick cannot be returned to its original formless state, the essence of a person after death cannot be reshaped or returned to a state of pure potentiality.

Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) recognized the transition from life to death, a state beyond human comprehension. He emphasizes the importance of contemplating one's mortality. A person can strive to live virtuously through constant vigilance and self-reflection. This ensures that upon leaving this world, their essence will be integrity.

Just as a skilled potter creates a flawless vessel, a person who lives righteously cultivates a complete and unblemished character. Conversely, a life of negligence results in a flawed and ultimately useless vessel incapable of fulfilling its purpose.

The terms "grave" and "niche" are employed metaphorically to represent the intermediate realm, also known as the world of Barzakh, and the world of mithāl or the world of images.

أبكي لِظُلمةِ قَبري، أبكي لِضيقِ لَحدي.

The statement "I weep for the darkness of my grave" does not refer to the physical darkness of a tomb. Rather, it signifies a spiritual darkness experienced in the world of images. Individuals are not subject to the physical body's limitations in this realm.

It is important to distinguish the world of images from the physical grave. Neither lamps nor the questioning angels, Munkar and Nakir, are present in the physical grave. Within the world of images, the soul assumes a mithāl form.

This realm is not characterized by physical. Imagine a brightly lit room where your body resides. If the lights were extinguished, your physical form would be shrouded in darkness. However, the knowledge and inherent light within your soul would remain unaffected. The darkness referenced here pertains to the 'ālam mithāl (imaginal realm), not the physical world.[78]

I weep for the darkness and gloom that lies before me in the 'ālam mithāl (imaginal realm), for I must pass through those paths, and all is dark. How shall I pass through?

Respecting the Body of a Deceased Believer

أبكي لِضيقِ لَحدي.

The statement "I weep for the narrowness of my niche" alludes to the intermediate realm (barzakh) concept, not the physical niche itself. The niche's physical dimensions are a matter of individual choice. Widening the niche serves as a symbolic gesture of respect for the deceased's corporeal form, not their soul.

Ultimately, the rituals performed for the body, regardless of the niche's size or the body's final disposition, acknowledge that the body served as a vessel for the soul during life. This respect is shown through washing, shrouding, and burial. It's important to note that these rituals are not meant to establish communication with the deceased body but serve as a symbolic act of respect.

The true focus lies on the ālam barzakh, which is metaphorically referred to as the "narrow niche" (laḥd-لَحد). This metaphor highlights the concept of the intermediate realm as a transitional state between the physical world and the hereafter.

The Interrogation by Munkar and Nakir: Focus on Spiritual Knowledge

أبكي لِسؤالِ مُنكَرٍ و نَكيرٍ إيّايَ!

I weep for Munkar and Nakir's questioning.

This expresses fear of the interrogation faced by the deceased in the afterlife. Angels are said to question individuals about their lives on Earth.

The focus of this questioning will be on substantive knowledge, not on trivia. They don't ask about the meaning of a specific rose variety or the historical details of a conquest. These are contrasted with "true knowledge," deemed more relevant to the afterlife.

Worldly knowledge, including history, geography, and mathematics, holds undeniable value. However, its pursuit should be guided by a higher purpose, such as fostering personal development or contributing to the betterment of society. Exalting these disciplines to an ultimate goal represents a significant misstep.

The Hadith on Knowledge and Its Purpose

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) is reported to have said:

اللّهمّ إنّي أعوذُ بكَ من علمٍ لا ينفَعُ.[79]

O Allah, I seek refuge in You from knowledge that does not benefit.

This Hadith does not condemn all knowledge but calls to prioritize knowledge that positively impacts spiritual development and well-being.

The vast expanse of human knowledge encompasses a multitude of disciplines. However, a fundamental question arises: how much of this knowledge directly relates to our ultimate fate? Is the knowledge of music true or false? Music is a precise science based on precise principles and has real-world effects. Music can put people to sleep, wake them up, cry, laugh, or even drive them mad. It can be used to incite people to war, making them so frenzied that they kill without even realizing what they are doing.

These are the effects of music, but this knowledge is forbidden because these superficial effects are not in humanity's best interests.

The knowledge of magic is also a real science. It can be used, for example, to create love between two people. However, it is forbidden because it is not in humanity's best interests.

The same is true of the knowledge of divination.

The Description of the Pious in the Sermon of Hammam

In the Sermon of Hammam, the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), describes the pious as follows:

و وَقَفوا أسماعَهُم على العلمِ النّافعِ لهُم.[80]

And they have turned their ears to the knowledge that benefits them.[81]

The pious focus is on knowledge that benefits them rather than being indiscriminate information consumers. This includes being mindful of the words and speeches they engage with, avoiding unnecessary gatherings, and exercising discernment in who they listen to.

Extensive exposure to worldly knowledge may hinder an individual's capacity for spiritual connection. A mind preoccupied with secular information might struggle to embrace religious texts or teachings, often called "the words of God." This perspective emphasizes the importance of spiritual receptiveness, achieved by letting go of worldly concerns and creating space for divine messages.

People who immerse themselves in superficial knowledge are deprived of true knowledge. They leave their hearts hungry and empty, and later, their hearts and minds will no longer be able to receive divine knowledge.

Islamic scholar Shahid Thani emphasizes the importance of a two-pronged approach for students of religious sciences. They must cultivate both knowledge and action.[82]

A balanced life integrates both intellectual pursuits and spiritual development. While dedication to study can enhance intellectual knowledge, neglecting spiritual practices like night prayers may lead to a sense of emotional and spiritual emptiness.

The heart can become "saturated" with purely intellectual knowledge, leaving no room for the deeper forms of "divine knowledge."

Therefore, one must engage in practices like self-purification and refinement. This is believed to maintain the heart's receptivity to spiritual understanding and allow cultivating the "aptitude" to receive these deeper forms of knowledge.

أبكي لِخُروجي مِن قَبري عُرياناً ذَليلاً حامِلاً ثِقلي عَلىٰ ظَهري.

I weep for my emergence from the grave, naked and humiliated, carrying the weight of my sins on my back.

أنظُرُ مَرَّةً عَن يَميني و أخرىٰ عَن شِمالي.

I look once to my right and once to my left.

إذِ الخَلائِقُ في شَأنٍ غَيرِ شَأني.

All creatures except me are preoccupied with their affairs in the gathering place. No one cares about anyone else; not even a father cares about his son. He is so busy with his troubles that he cannot help anyone else.

Self-Preservation and the Neglect of Loved Ones in Times of Crisis

When an earthquake strikes and buildings are about to collapse, a mother who would sacrifice herself for her child will leave her infant in the room and flee to the desert. Later, she realizes that she left her child behind and ran away! This is how self-love is; when a blow comes, it confuses a person, and they involuntarily move toward their goal. Since their primary goal is to preserve their life, they forget about their child, father, wife, and children.

يوم يفر المرء من أخيه وأمه وأبيه وصاحبته وبنيه لكل امرئ منهم يومئذ شان يغنيه وجوه يومئذ مسفرة ضاحكة مستبشرة ووجوه يومئذ عليها غبرة ترهقها قترة أولئك هم الكفرة الفجرة .[83]

On the Day, a man will flee from his brother, mother, father, wife, and children. For everyone, that Day will be a matter that will preoccupy him. [Some] faces, that Day, will be bright, laughing and rejoicing, while [other] faces that Day will be covered with dust, and a dark shadow will cover them. Those are the disbelievers, the wicked.

On the Day of Judgement, even the strongest social bonds, such as the love between a parent and child, are said to dissolve in the face of overwhelming anxiety. This is due to the shift from a material focus (the body received from one's father) to a purely spiritual state where earthly considerations no longer sway.

فإذا نفخ في الصور فلا أنساب بينهم يومئذ ولا يتساءلون.

When the Trumpet is blown, there will be no kinship on that Day, nor will they ask of one another. (Quran, 23:101)

This means all kinship ties will be severed when the Trumpet is blown on the Day of Judgment. Preoccupied solely with their destinies, individuals will lack concern for the fates of their loved ones. Kinship belongs to this world. In the next world, relationships will be based on true spiritual connections. People will be drawn to those similar to them in terms of their spiritual qualities.

On the Day of Judgment, people will flee from their loved ones. They will be so concerned with their salvation that they will not even have time to think about others.

ضاحكة مستبشرة.

Laughing and rejoicing.

The believers' faces on the Day of Judgment are bright, beautiful, happy, and joyful. You see them laughing and moving from one side of the assembly to the other. Their laughter is an expression of happiness and their deep inner joy.

The believers are so happy that they can barely contain themselves. They are eager for the Day of Judgment and the Day of Resurrection to end so that they can be rewarded for their good deeds.

ووجوه يومئذ عليها غبرة.

On that Day, there will be faces covered with dust.

ترهقها قترة [وذلة].

Poverty and humiliation have befallen it.

أولئك هم الكفرة الفجرة.

Those are the disbelievers, the wicked.

They are the debauchers and blasphemers who have taken over the whole world. They are miserable, and their hands are empty [from spiritual reward].

The Meaning of Human Nakedness on the Day of Judgment

The Imam says: I weep for fear of emerging from the grave naked. In the afterlife, a person's attire is not this physical shroud. Instead, they will be clothed differently. This earthly shroud may decompose in the grave, but it has no bearing on the individual's state hereafter.

The physical body within the Plain of Resurrection differs from the one buried in the grave. Though a physical form exists, it's not the same material body laid to rest. The earthly shroud and all physical components will decompose. During the Resurrection, a person requires a spiritual shroud corresponding to the soul's inhabiting body. This shroud serves as the veil of God's protection, concealing human imperfections. Without it, an individual is considered exposed. This concept is reflected in hadiths, which state that those who commit specific sins will be resurrected "naked" on the Day of Judgment.[84] Even if clothed and granted a long lifespan in the earthly realm, such individuals would still be considered unclothed before God.

ذليلاً.

I fear the day I rise from the grave, abject and humiliated, bereft of all grace. I see all others who toiled and strove, who trod the path and reached their goals, now honored and cherished in the sight of God. But I, alas, am wretched and forlorn, for I have squandered my life in vain. My nafs deceived me, and now I face the bitter fruit of my folly.

حاملاً ثقلي على ظهري.

I bear a heavy burden on my back- the weight of my sins crushing me down.

I find myself utterly alone. No one offers even a shred of assistance in lightening this heavy burden. No one can say, "You seem weary, fellow believer. These transgressions are weighing you down terribly. Allow me to share some of this burden with you."

Unfortunately, everyone else seems to be in the same predicament. They, too, desperately seek to shed the weight of their sins. After all, the burden of sin is simply unbearable. Even a minor transgression feels as heavy as Mount Uhud. How, then, can anyone endure the weight of their failings?

The Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his family) said: When a person dies with an injustice against another person's rights, on the Day of Judgment, the Most High God will say: 'Give the oppressed person their due! Whether it is dirhams, dinars, honor, or wealth, give them whatever their due is!' There will be no money or anything else to give in that place. The person will not be able to pay the debt! Even if they could, it would be of no use! There is no money in that realm; the currency of that world is different. So, the good deeds of the oppressor will be taken and given to the one whose rights were violated. If the oppressor has no good deeds, their sins will be taken and given to the wronged person.[85]

In another narration, we have:

كفّارةُ المُغتابِ أن تَستَغفِرَ لَهُ.[86]

The Prophet's teachings emphasize the importance of seeking forgiveness for the one who backbites. This act of seeking forgiveness is not just a recommendation but a necessary step toward making amends.

While backbiting is an act of injustice, the Prophet's advice provides a clear path for addressing this transgression. He advised seeking forgiveness for the person spoken about adversely, guidance that supports our journey toward making amends.

Directly informing someone you backbitten about them can worsen the situation. If they've already become aware, a sincere apology is the most effective way to restore the relationship and remove any lingering resentment.

This reconciles two seemingly contradictory hadiths: seeking forgiveness is recommended for backbiting, while direct amends may be necessary for other offenses.

Understanding the Companions of the Right and Left

"Companions of the Right" and "Companions of the Left" describe individuals' fate in the afterlife.

أبكي لِخُروجي مِن قبري عُرياناً ذَليلاً، حامِلاً ثِقلي عَلىٰ ظَهري! أنظُرُ مَرّةً عَن يَميني!

I weep for my departure from my grave, naked and humiliated, carrying a burden on my back! I look once to my right!

In Islamic eschatology, the right side symbolizes blessedness and reward. The word "yumn" itself means "blessing" and is the root of the term "al-yamīn" (right hand). Since the right hand is typically dominant for many actions, it becomes associated with positive connotations of favor and accomplishment. Conversely, the left side carries a connotation of weakness and misfortune. The term "al-shimāl" (left hand) refers to the non-dominant hand, and "Ashab al-Yamin" (Companions of the Right) and "Ashab al-Shimal" (Companions of the Left) represent those destined for paradise and hellfire, respectively.[87]

Emerging from the grave, I gaze to my right (aṣḥāb yamin) and then to my left (aṣḥāb shimāl). All around me, a scene unfolds: individuals solely preoccupied with their fates.

A stark contrast to my predicament. They are engrossed in their circumstances, so utterly different from mine.

No one spares a thought for the misfortune befalling this wretched soul in this critical hour. No helping hand is offered, nor does the notion seem to occur to them.

Seeking personal gain is the axis of worldly friendships

يوم لا ينفع مال ولا بنون إلا من أتى الله بِقَلبٍ سَليم.

[On the Day] when neither wealth nor children will benefit. Except for one who comes to Allah with a sound heart. (Quran, 26:88-89)

The world operates on impermanence. These grand displays of selflessness, these passionate declarations of love – ultimately, they all fade with time.

عشق هایی کز پی رنگی بود
عشق نبود عاقبت ننگی بود.[88]

Where love on the shallow ground is sown,
No blossom blooms, but seeds of shame are grown.

The expression of love within families, whether between mothers and children, husbands and wives, or siblings, often stems from complex motivations, including potential benefits for the self. If that foundation is shaken, not only will that love cease, but those people will become the most hated people in the world to him.

Business partners often experience a strong sense of camaraderie during the initial stages of their venture. This is characterized by a high degree of mutual support, as evidenced by their collaborative efforts in preparing the store for opening. They focus entirely on achieving a shared objective: attracting customers and maximizing profit. This initial period can be characterized by strong loyalty, with partners fiercely defending each other against external threats.

However, this positive dynamic can deteriorate rapidly if the partnership dissolves. Disagreements, suspicion, and, ultimately, a breakdown in trust can lead to a complete cessation of collaboration. Former partners may become completely estranged, refusing even basic acknowledgments like greetings. This animosity can escalate to the point where each partner resorts to public accusations, vilifying the other and highlighting their perceived shortcomings. This destructive behavior highlights the precarious nature of partnerships built solely on self-interest ("the axis of use"). When mutual benefit ceases to be the driving force, the initial camaraderie can easily transform into bitter enmity.

While a divinely ordained attraction initially draws spouses together, a fractured marital foundation can lead to a complete disintegration of love. Fueled by an instinct, the initial bond can deteriorate into intense animosity. When trust is broken and love sours, the desire for partnership can be replaced by a desire to inflict harm.

A Memorable Story from Ayatollah Tihrani's Hajj Journey

After completing the stoning ritual in Mina, we were returning to our camp when one of our fellow pilgrims, a kind and cheerful man from Ardabil, approached me and described the stoning ritual excitedly, remarking on the massive crowd and the unique atmosphere. Then, he shared something amusing he had witnessed: "Some people were using objects other than stones to throw at the pillars, such as shoes, canes, and even a woman's sandal!"

He described the woman raising her sandal and aiming it at the pillar, saying, "This is for my husband!"I exclaimed, "But sister, a sandal won't do any damage! You need to throw your stone!"She replied, "I've already thrown my stone. This one is on behalf of my husband!" She hurled the sandal at the pillar, cursing, "You scoundrel! You're the one who led my husband astray!"

It's remarkable how a woman's perception of her husband can change so drastically. On their wedding night, she might have described him as an angelic soul so pure that he shouldn't even be called human. But now, she sees him as the embodiment of evil.

This dramatic shift is due to their relationship's shaken foundation. Trust has been broken, and love has turned to resentment.

Only friendships based on piety will remain

الأخلاء يومئذ بعضهم لبعض عدو إلا المتقين.

On that Day, those who loved each other here will become enemies of each other, except for the muttaqīn (pious and God-fearing); they will continue to love each other because their love is based on God). (Quran, 43:67)

On the Day of Judgment, all relationships will be severed, except those based on piety. True friendship is rooted in a shared love of God and a commitment to righteousness. Such friendships will endure even beyond the grave.

True Friendship Transcends Worldly Concerns

Strong bonds can exist between spouses, siblings, parents, children, or even friends who share religious beliefs. These relationships survive because their foundation is spiritual and transcends worldly concerns. All other forms of love, built on less substantial ground, will eventually crumble.[89]

Be wary of excessive flattery or elaborate displays of respect. These are often disingenuous attempts to manipulate you.

True Intentions Revealed by Conflict

Those who approach you with ulterior motives will quickly reveal their true colors when their interests clash with yours. They will resort to insults and fabrications to discredit you, highlighting the hollowness of their previous displays of affection.

خلق را تقلیدشان بر باد داد
ای دو صد لعنت بر این تقلید باد.[90]

People are ravaged by their imitation
Two hundred curses be upon that imitation.

A truly authentic person prioritizes their integrity over external validation. They are unconcerned with fleeting desires, social status, or praise. Their primary focus is on living a life of truth and inner peace, regardless of others' approval.

لكل امرئ منهم يومئذ شأن يغنيه.[91]

The verse emphasizes that everyone will be solely preoccupied with their fate on the Day of Judgment. Each individual will have challenges, leaving no time or energy for seeking recognition or comparing themselves to others.

اللهم صل على محمد و آل محمد.

Session Sixteen

God's infinite grace and mercy: the shortcomings of His servants

أعوذُ باللهِ مِن الشّيطانِ الرّجيم
بِسم اللهِ الرّحمنِ الرّحيم
و صلّى اللهُ علىٰ محمّدٍ و آلِهِ الطّاهرينَ
و لعنةُ اللهِ علىٰ أعدائِهِم أجمعين

I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan.
In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
May Allah bless Muhammad and his pure family.
And may the curse of Allah be upon all of their enemies.

My hope and trust are only in You, O God.

سيّدي! عليكَ مُعوّلي و مُعتمَدي و رَجائي و تَوكّلي، و بِرحمتِكَ تَعلّقي، تُصيبُ بِرحمتِكَ مَن تَشاءُ، و تَهدي بِكرامتِكَ مَن تُحِبُّ؛ فلَكَ الحَمدُ علىٰ ما نَقّيتَ مِنَ الشِّركِ قَلبي، و لَكَ الحَمدُ علىٰ بَسطِ لِساني.

O my Master, O my Lord, O my Great One! My trust, hope, and reliance are on You.
With Your mercy is my attachment. You afflict with Your mercy whom You will, and You guide with Your honor whom You love. So to You is the praise for what You have purified my heart from polytheism, and to You is the praise for the expansion of my tongue!

و بِرحمتِكَ تَعلّقي.

By Your mercy is my dependence.

تُصيبُ بِرحمتِكَ مَن تَشاءُ، و تَهدي بِكرامتِكَ مَن تُحِبُّ.

You afflict with Your mercy whomever You will, and You guide with Your generosity whomever You love.

فلَكَ الحَمدُ علىٰ ما نَقّيتَ مِنَ الشِّركِ قَلبي.

Therefore, praise be to You for purifying my heart from polytheism.

و لَكَ الحَمدُ علىٰ بَسطِ لِساني.

Praise be to you who have made my tongue eloquent with these words.

Exalted God, I call upon You with complete faith and trust. You are my sole source of hope and reliance. I entrust all my affairs to Your wisdom and judgment, surrendering my own will to Yours. I am sustained by Your infinite mercy and utterly dependent on Your love.

I acknowledge Your absolute power and discretion in bestowing Your grace and guiding those You favor toward Your benevolence. This recognition affirms my Tawhid (belief in the Oneness of God). I understand You possess these divine attributes, and these actions are solely within Your domain.

Therefore, my heart is free from Shirk (polytheism). In my words, I acknowledge Your sacred essence as the sole source of all creation, rejecting any attribution of such power to any other being. I have not ascribed any partners or equals to You in recognizing these attributes. This purity of heart allows me to praise You with these truthful affirmations.

I humbly recognize that this purity is not of my own. You have cleansed my heart and delivered me from Shirk in Your mercy. Thus, all praise belongs to You for purifying my heart and granting me the awareness to express these praises. May continued praise be upon You for granting me the ability to speak these words of devotion.

أ فَبِلِساني هٰذا الكالِّ أشكُرُكَ؟

Is this feeble and sluggish tongue truly capable of expressing my gratitude?

Indeed, You have cleansed my heart from Shirk (polytheism) and granted eloquence to my tongue. For this, all praise belongs to You. Yet, I recognize that this tongue lacks the power to articulate Your praises fully and offer the thanksgiving You deserve. It remains inadequate for such a monumental task.

Kaal (كَلّ), with emphasis on the Lam, is characterized by a lack of robustness - a fundamental weakness. Kallah (كَلَّ) or succumbing to fatigue or becoming burdened to the point of weariness. I am rendered incapable due to excessive encumbrance - a severe state of weakness caused by an overwhelming burden.

Can I truly express my gratitude, O God, with this very tongue and language with which I praise You for all the praiseworthy attributes that are exclusive to You and all the blessings that You have bestowed upon me? This Kaal tongue, which has become heavy, weak, and slow, how can it express my gratitude for Your blessings?

O God, with the utmost effort, can I truly satisfy You?

أم بِغايةِ جُهدی (جَهدی) فی عَمَلی أُرضیکَ؟

Can even the most dedicated efforts I can muster, the full exertion of my abilities directed towards Your will, ever truly satisfy You?

Exalted God, even if I exert all my efforts and dedicate everything within my power to pursue Your pleasure, can I truly attain the lofty and sacred station of Your complete satisfaction? How can I, through my actions, even with the utmost exertion, win Your favor and attain Your contentment?

و ما قدرُ لِسانی یا ربِّ فی جَنبِ شُکرِکَ.

How can my words ever truly express my gratitude? What value do they truly possess?

Even if I could fully articulate Your praises, my words would need a capability that matches the magnitude of such a task. Yet, my words are utterly feeble. They are worth nothing compared to the immensity of Your blessings. their inadequacy is such that it defies valuation. How can I equate my words with the gratitude that befits Your station? My phrase, in all its inadequacy, holds no value whatsoever. How can I express gratitude for the countless blessings You have bestowed upon me? It is utterly worthless and incapable.

و ما قَدرُ لِسانی یا رَبِّ فی جَنبِ شُکرِکَ، و ما قَدرُ عَمَلی فی جَنبِ نِعَمِکَ و إحسانِکَ [إلیَّ]!

How can my actions compensate for the countless blessings and favors You have bestowed upon me? What value does my work truly hold that I may place my reliance upon it? Only Your generosity gives us hope!

إلَهی إنَّ جودَکَ بَسَطَ أمَلی، و شُکرَکَ قَبِلَ عَمَلی.

O God, the truth is that Your boundless and limitless generosity, kindness, and beneficence have kindled a deep yearning within me.

Exalted God, I deeply desire to attain Your presence and the station of nearness to You. But by what means can I achieve this? Can it be through Thanksgiving that my language utters? My dialect holds no value in itself! How can it possess any worth before Your blessings? Can I reach You through my actions in response to the blessings and favors You have bestowed upon me? My action holds no value whatsoever! So what then compels me to strive towards You? It is only Your generosity!

Your generosity is boundless, and Your kindness is immeasurable and infinite. This very nature inspires a yearning within me that cannot be contained. I long for You, as it has been said:

إن ّ لنا فيک أملاً طويلاً.

Indeed, we have a long hope in You.

Were Your generosity and bestowal limited, our desire would be stifled, confined, and incapable of reaching towards You. For us who seek to cultivate yearning and strive towards You, to attain the station of closeness to You, there are two possibilities: either we possess the inherent capacity and strength to move towards You, or You, in Your infinite mercy, draw us closer. When we contemplate our limitations, we recognize our absolute emptiness, devoid of action and the ability to express our yearning. We are powerless to move on our own.

However, when we gaze towards You, we behold the Most Generous, Kind, and Merciful. This essence fills us with hope and opens our hearts to yearn for You.

O God, if You were to confine Your generosity and benevolence solely to the exceptionally righteous, the divinely favored, and those of inherent purity, then all hope would be extinguished for us. We would be left to declare, "There is neither initiative on our part nor attraction from Your side; thus, humanity would be condemned to perpetual stagnation."

On our own, we recognize our absolute insignificance. However, Your generosity knows no bounds. We perceive infinity on Your side, an endless bounty! Rain falling from the heavens doesn't meticulously calculate how much to dispense upon the dwelling of an elderly woman, the house of Zayd, the home of Amr, the streets and alleys, or the vast deserts. The rain pours, and every vessel presented to it receives a portion of this merciful downpour. The pool in your esteemed residence gathers its share, while the rivers claim theirs from this abundant source.

A small vessel receives a smaller amount, while a larger one is filled more generously. The rain makes no distinction between the virtuous and the wicked, the clean and the unclean. It falls upon all creation equally.

أنزل من السماء ماء فسالت أودية بقدرها فاحتمل السيل زبدا رابيا.

[He] sends down from the sky water, the valleys flow according to their capacity, and the torrent carries [along] a rising foam. (Quran 13:17)

Your grace is boundless, while our capacity to receive it is finite

The generosity You bestow arrives freely, unconstrained by measurement or calculation. We approach Your grace like someone venturing out into the rain. Some bring a small bowl, others a large tray. Some have expansive, well-maintained roofs that collect vast amounts of water, while others possess smaller, less efficient surfaces. The amount received reflects the vessel presented, not the nature of the rain itself.

Therefore, our limited nature and desires restrict our perception of Your boundless power and generosity. Your grace itself is not limited; it flows freely from You. This is a cause for immense joy! Knowing God bestows His grace upon everyone without reservation or measure is a source of profound happiness.

Those whose capacity and understanding are limited are confined by their restrictions. If they can overcome these limitations, break free from these self-imposed constraints, and expand their hearts, then the vast ocean of Your grace and mercy will flow into their being.

The rain of Your love and compassion falls eternally. It is up to us to enlarge our vessels and open our hearts to receive it fully. When we do, we will experience the limitless abundance of Your love.

The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him and his progeny) is reported to have said:

ألا إنّ لله في أيّام دهركم نفحات، ألا فتعرّضوا لها و لا تعرضوا عنها![92]

Behold! In the days of your life, there are breezes from God. Expose yourselves to them, and do not turn away from them!

There are moments when God's grace and mercy are particularly abundant. These moments are like refreshing breezes that can cleanse our hearts and souls and bring us closer to Him.

If we are mindful and attentive during these times, we can open our hearts to these divine breezes and allow them to transform us. However, if we are heedless and distracted, these breezes will pass us by without having any effect.

Therefore, the Lord's generosity is boundless. This infinite quality allows us to hold onto our aspirations and keeps the door to our hopes eternally open.

The Lord does not say, "You should not harbor this desire. You will never reach the station of Qurb(spiritual closeness), and your efforts are in vain. "

After all, God's generosity isn't limited, unlike your existence. If this were the case, our aspirations would indeed be extinguished. However, Your generosity is limitless and extends to enveloping our very existence! Therefore, our desires remain open before You. Because of this openness, we permit ourselves to yearn for closeness to You on our path toward achieving Qurb. This very concept necessitates harboring desires aligned with Your will.

و شكرك قبل عملي.

Your gratitude is before my deed.

Our actions are worthless and not worthy of You, but the gratitude from You has accepted our actions.

You said, "If you are grateful, I will surely increase you."

لئن شكرتم لازيدنكم.[93]

You said, "Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Grateful."

إنه غفور شكور.[94]

سيّدي، إليك رغبتي و إليك رهبتي و إليك تأميلي، و قد ساقني إليك أملي، و عليك يا واحدي عكفت همّتي، و فيما عندك انبسطت رغبتي، و لك خالص رجائي و خوفي، و بك أنست محبّتي، و إليك ألقيت بيدي، و بحبل طاعتك مددت رهبتي!

My Master, to You is my desire, to You is my fear, and to You is my hope. My hope has driven me to You, and I have focused my determination upon You, O my One. My desire has expanded in what is with You; my pure hope and fear is to You. With You, my love has found comfort, and to You, I have cast myself. With the rope of Your obedience, I have extended my fear.

O my God, O my Master, and O my Lord! You know that I have focused my desire and longing on You alone.

تركت للنّاس دنياهم و دينهم
شغلاً بذكرك يا ديني و دنياي.[95]

Driven by their desires, aspirations, and dreams, people tirelessly pursue their goals. Some seek solace in religion, while others strive for worldly success. Still others yearn for heavenly rewards or personal sanctity. God, You are my witness to the fact that I have relinquished control over these worldly pursuits. Let each person follow their chosen path, be it religious or secular. My purpose and devotion reside solely in You.

Wherever Your presence is, all that exists finds meaning. Where You are absent, there is only emptiness.

ماذا وجد من فقدک، و ماذا فقد من وجدک.

What has he gained who has strayed from You? And what has he lost who has found You? (Nothing!)

Exalted God, my faith is defined by Your will, and my world exists within Your design. If it is not what You desire, it holds no meaning as religion, even if the whole world proclaims it so. Without Your guidance, I cannot grasp the true meaning of faith. Even the world, with all its collective effort, cannot hold any value for me if it is not Your will. It is meaningless. My true faith and the entirety of my world reside in You.

Munājāt al-murīdīn (The Whispered Prayer of the Devotees) is one of The Fifteen Whispered Prayers attributed to Imam al-Sajjad (peace be upon him). It is narrated in al-Sahifa al-sajjadiyya, Bihar al-anwar, and Mafatih al-jinan. According to Allama al-Majlisi, reciting this prayer on Friday is preferred.

Munājāt al-murīdīn, narrated from Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him), beautifully expresses this meaning.

A Glimpse into Mystical Love: The Story of Majnun

They say that people debated theology with Majnun, a man consumed by love for Layla, throughout the night. The discussion centered on whether Ali or Umar held the rightful position. Exhaustedly, they asked him, "Who holds the truth? Ali or Umar?" Majnun's reply, defying their expectations, was, "The truth lies with Layla; the truth lies with Layla!"

This story is a powerful allegory. It illustrates that all else fades for someone in the throes of such profound love. Just as Majnun sees truth only in Layla, the true devotee mystic finds their guiding light and the source of their faith in the beloved (the Divine). Their word is rendered meaningless; only the beloved's will matters. This complete surrender of the heart defines wilayah ("authority" or "guardianship") but, in this context, refers to the mystical concept of devotion. It signifies the devotee's will being replaced by the beloved's.

They say that when Imam Husayn, Sayyid Al-Shuhada (peace be upon him) fell on the ground, he said:

تَرَكتُ الخَلقَ طُرّاً فی هَواکا
و أیتَمتُ العِیالَ لِکَی أراکا

I have forsaken all people for Your sake and Your love!
And I have left my family and children alone and orphaned so that I may see You.

و لو قَطَّعتَنی فی الحُبِّ إرباً
لَما حَنَّ الفُؤادُ إلی سِواکا.[96]

Even if You cut me into pieces with a sword, my heart will not turn away from You.

سیّدی إلیکَ رَغبَتی.

O God, my desire is towards You.

O God, all my longing is directed towards You. Rest assured, my desires, focus, and aspirations lie solely with You. My yearning for You is singular and absolute; there is no room for divided affections.

و إلیکَ رَهبَتی.

To You is my fear.

I dread not the sting of your wrath nor the fires of Hell. No, my deepest fear is Your estrangement, Your absence from my soul. For I fear nothing in this world compared to the desolation of being cut off from Your presence. Your embrace, O God, defines my existence; its withdrawal is the ultimate loss.[97]

و إلَيکَ تَأميلى.

To You is my hope.

و قَد ساقَنى إلَيکَ أمَلى.

The hope that I have has drawn me to You.

I who wandered in the deserts, the hope I have in You has drawn me to You. Baba Taher says:

غم عشقت بیابان‌پرورم کرد
فراغت مرغ بی‌بال و پرم کرد
به مو واجی صبوری کن صبوری
صبوری طرفه‌خاکی بر سرم کرد.[98]

The sorrow of your love has turned me into a desert dweller,
Your absence has made me a bird with no wings or feathers.
They tell me to be patient, but patience
has thrown a handful of dust on my head.

و قَد ساقَنى إلَيکَ أمَلى.

O God, my yearning for You consumes me. Sleep and sustenance hold no appeal, social gatherings seem distant, and worldly concerns fade into insignificance.

While others chase after fleeting desires, thoughts, and fancies, we have become transformed. Barefoot and seemingly mad to the worldly eye, we are consumed by this love for You that has awakened within us. This yearning has brought us to a state of complete devotion.

و عَلَيکَ يا واحِدى، عَكَفتُ هِمَّتى.

Exalted One, my singular God, You who exist without compare, the embodiment of unity! I stand at Your threshold, and my resolve is unwavering.

O God, I lay before You all my resolve, all my strength, all that I possess. Though my offerings may be meager, You know my heart, O Provider. I come to You with all that I have.

A Seyyed's Encounter on the Path to Hajj

A Sayyid, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, embarked on a pilgrimage to Hajj. On his journey, he reached Baghdad and sought an audience with a revered saint, as instructed by his teacher. Upon meeting the Sayyid, the saint inquired, "Where are you headed, esteemed one? Is it Hajj that brings you here?" "Indeed," replied the Sayyid.

The saint then offered an enigmatic statement: "Your ancestor, Ali ibn Abi Talib, wielded two swords. One he used for self-reflection, and the other for the defense of others."

This was not a literal explanation but an allusion. The saint prompted Sayyid to examine his motivations for the Hajj. Was it driven by personal desires, sightseeing, or external factors? Or was it a sincere journey of faith, a quest for connection with the Divine? He reminded Sayyid of his esteemed ancestor, Ali, who constantly battled his inner self (nafs) while serving the people. The saint questioned whether Sayyid was truly prepared for the spiritual significance of the pilgrimage.

The Sayyid contemplated deeply. He then surprised everyone by opening his purse and presenting it to the saint. "My journey is complete," he declared. "I have attained my goal. I have visited the Kaaba and performed Tawaf (circumambulation)." Remarkably, he decided to turn back, his priorities realigned by the saint's wisdom.[99]

Complete Surrender: A Seeker Tale

وَ عَلَيكَ يا واحِدي عَكَفَتْ هِمَّتي.

To You, O One, my resolve is utterly dedicated. My entire purpose is focused here, and I have no other aspiration.

I have brought and offered everything within my power. What remains now? Nothing! I gave it all, readily and without reservation.

The story is about a seeker approaching a revered teacher and saying, "I desire instruction and to act upon it." The teacher inquired, "Are you truly prepared to act?" The seeker affirmed, "Yes." The teacher said, "Go, sell, convert everything you own into cash, and bring it here. That is all."

It is no simple feat to relinquish all one's possessions. A person's family has needs, friends have desires, and as the saying goes, we encounter challenges, limitations, and vulnerabilities during our brief time on earth. It is natural to want some form of security. Yet, the teacher's command was clear, leaving no room for hesitation.

With unwavering resolve, the seeker sold all his belongings, converting them into gold dinars. He then placed them in a bag and brought them to the teacher. The teacher, however, surprised him by saying, "Go and throw these into the Tigris River, and then return."

The seeker had envisioned using the money for charitable purposes – feeding the poor, clothing those in need, building a mosque, or performing other acts of service. Now, he was instructed to cast it all away! It seemed incomprehensible.

Bound by his commitment, the seeker approached the Tigris. He opened the bag, took a dinar, and hesitantly threw it into the water. He repeated this, each throw filled with doubt. Finally, the bag was empty.

The teacher then spoke, his voice firm, "Leave. You are not suited for this path. You threw the dinars individually, demonstrating a lack of complete surrender. You are not ready for this journey."[100]

وَ عَلَيكَ يا واحِدي، عَكَفَتْ هِمَّتي؛ يا عَكَفَتْ هِمَّتي.

To You, O One, my resolve is devoted, or my resolve is devoted.

□ عَكَفَتْ هِمَّتي.

I have brought my resolve here.

وَ فيما عِندَكَ انبَسَطَتْ رَغبَتي.

In what is with you, my desire has expanded.

Before you, my potential remained unrealized, like a flower bud that refuses to bloom. But just as a morning breeze can coax a bud to open, your presence has ignited the spark of hope within me.

Once realized, this potential cannot revert to a dormant state. Actuality cannot become potentiality again. Because of you, my being has blossomed with hope, and your compassion has rejuvenated the flower of my being.

My hope and fear are both centered on you.

وَ لَكَ خالِصُ رَجائي.

To You is my pure hope.

That pure hope and aspiration of mine free from anxiety, doubt, or deception belongs to You.

My hope and fear are solely directed towards you. This devotion is likened to how mothers shower their children with affection, calling them "the hope of my heart" and "the life of my life." I am uttering that, O God, "You are the sole source of my hope and well-being, just as a child is everything to their mother."

و خوفی.

My fear is also confined to You.

My fear, as well as my hope, finds its sole focus in You, O God. Just as I hold no hope except for You, I have no fear except Your absence. Losing the entire world wouldn't terrify me, but losing Your presence would.

وَ بِکَ أَنِسَتْ مَحَبَّتی.

Through You, my love has found solace.

My love has turned towards You, and this magnetic attraction and pull of my heart has turned towards You!

یا مَنْ هُوَ لِلْقُلوبِ مِغناطیسُ.[101]

O You who are the magnet for hearts!

وَ إلیکَ أَلقَیتُ بِیَدی.

O God, I surrender myself completely to You. I place my burdens and heart in Your hands, trusting Your guidance. I relinquish control, offering my entire being to Your will.

وَ بِحَبلِ طاعَتِکَ مَدَدتُ رَهبَتی.

Through obedience to You, I have cultivated a sense of awe and fear that guides me away from wrongdoing.

یا مَولایَ! بِذِکرِکَ عاشَ قَلبی.

O my Master! By Your remembrance, my heart lives.

O God, my heart finds true life only through the constant remembrance of You. When I am mindful of You, my spirit thrives. But in moments of forgetfulness, I feel a sense of emptiness. Therefore, my genuine existence is limited to my time focused on You.

بی عمر زنده‌ام من و این بس عجب مدار
روز فراق را که نَهَد در شمارِ عمر.[102]

Without Your presence in my thoughts, I experience a kind of spiritual death. If someone were to ask how long I have truly lived, I would say, 'Not at all.' My life feels devoid of meaning when separated from You. Only those who constantly connect with You experience true and lasting life.

وَ بِمُناجاتِکَ بَرَّدتُ أَلَمَ الخَوفِ عَنّی.

Through communion with You, O God, I find solace from the burning fear that threatens to consume me.

Haunting memories from the past sometimes threaten to sever my connection with Your divine presence. These memories whisper accusations and doubts, urging You to reject me and withhold Your blessings. When the sting of these fears threatens to overwhelm me, I seek solace in heartfelt communication with You. By pouring out my troubles and anxieties in quiet contemplation (munājāt), I find the peace and tranquility that extinguishes the flames of fear within me.

فَیا مَولایَ وَ یا مُؤَمَّلی وَ یا مُنتَهیٰ سُؤْلی! فَرِّق بَینی وَ بَینَ ذَنبِیَ المانِعِ لی مِن لُزومِ طاعَتِکَ!

Exalted God, my ultimate desire and the culmination of all my seeking, You are my Lord, my destination, the essence of my longing. This yearning within me leads only to You, and on this path, nothing else holds my desire. I implore You to sever the ties between me and the sins that keep me from constant devotion and obedience.

While I acknowledge my many shortcomings, I fear not the transgressions that do not bar me from Your presence. The sins that distance me from Your house and impede my unwavering obedience (meaning the steadfast commitment) terrify me. These sins cause me to falter in my devotion to You.

اَللّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِيَ الذُّنوبَ الَّتي تَهْتِكُ العِصَمَ.[103]

O God, forgive those sins that tear the veil of chastity.

As long as the veil of chastity is intact, man is in servitude. He is called to turn away from the divine presence when it is torn.

اَللّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِيَ الذُّنوبَ الَّتي تَحْبِسُ الدُّعاءَ.[104]

O God, forgive those sins that imprison prayer!

God, forgive the transgressions that block my prayers from reaching You. When sinfulness impedes my supplications, a sense of weakness, lethargy, and despair overwhelms me, hindering true devotion.

I implore You to keep me from all sins, for they distance me from Your obedience. However, I am particularly aware of certain sins with grave consequences: hurting the hearts of believers, disobeying my parents, bringing pain to the poor and downtrodden, and neglecting the sorrowful, the sick, and the helpless. Conversely, acts of kindness and compassion open paths for me. Cruelty constricts the spirit, while caring for others brings forth expansion and growth.

Separate me, O God, from the sins that hinder my commitment to Your will and obstruct my path to obedience.

فَإِنَّما أَسْأَلُكَ لِقَديمِ الرَّجاءِ فيكَ، وَ عَظيمِ الطَّمَعِ مِنكَ.

 O God, my hope in You is unwavering. It has always been strong, and it continues to grow. My yearning for Your presence is boundless. I do not focus on my insignificance, which would limit my desires' vastness. Compared to Your infinite glory, I am but a speck. The more I contemplate my smallness, the more I recognize Your immense power and majesty. This realization fuels my yearning for You.

الَّذي أَوْجَبْتَهُ عَلى نَفْسِكَ مِنَ الرَّأْفَةِ وَ الرَّحْمَةِ.

You have made mercy and compassion obligatory upon Yourself because You are the One who has always been hoped for and is greatly desired!

قديمالرّجاء و عظيمالطّمعى.

 Since You are the ever-present object of hope and the source of deepest yearning, You have made mercy and compassion an inherent part of Your nature. Your very being is the wellspring of endless compassion, as the sun radiates light by its essence.

Imagine the sun without its light. It would be a lifeless sphere devoid of the brilliance that defines it. Similarly, Your mercy is inseparable from Your existence. It permeates all creation, transforming darkness into light and renewing all things.

This is reflected in the natural world. The air is clear and invigorating at dawn as the sun's rays bathe the atmosphere with life-giving properties. Conversely, these beneficial qualities recede as the sun sets and withdraws its light. Therefore, studying at Bayn al-Ṭulūʿayn, the period between dawn and sunrise is beneficial when light is most vibrant. However, studying at sunset may lead to blindness.

There is also a narration from the Holy Prophet.

مَنْ أَحَبَّ كَريمَتاهُ، لَمْ يَكْتُبْ بَعْدَ العَصْرِ.[105]

He who loves his two eyes does not write after the afternoon.

The sun is like this, so how is the sun of the Lord's existence? Can He stop His light and stop His mercy?

اَللّهُمَّ إنّی أسألُکَ بِرَحمَتِکَ الّتی وَسِعَت کُلَّ شَیءٍ.[106]

The Imam implores: Your mercy and compassion are inherent to Your very being! Your grace extends to all creation by the very nature of Your existence. Our very existence depends on Your mercy; we would not be without it.

The meaning of Waḥdat Bil-Ṣarāfah of the Essence of Truth

In Islamic theology, the concept of "unitary by exclusion "(Waḥdat Bil-Ṣarāfah) refers to the unique and unparalleled nature of God's existence. It emphasizes that God is not like any other being and that His unity is absolute and cannot be compared to the unity of numbers.

فَالأمرُ لَکَ، وَحدَکَ لا شَریکَ لَکَ.

The matter is in Your hands. You are alone, and You have no partner.

In the year that our Prophet conquered Mecca, when he took hold of the door of the Kaaba and shook it, he cried out and said:

لا إله إلاّ الله! وَحدَهُ وَحدَهُ وَحدَهُ! أنجَزَ وَعدَهُ.[107]

There is no god but Allah! He is alone, alone, alone! He has fulfilled His promise - to the end; You are one, You are one, You are one!"

What kind of unity is this? What is the unity that the Quran explains to us? Waḥdat Bil-Ṣarāfah! That is, a unity with which duality is not assumed!

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, has several sermons in Nahj al-Balāghah about monotheism, which are truly amazing! One asserts that:

الحمدُ لِله الّذی لَیسَ لِصِفَتِهِ حَدٌّ مَحدودٌ و لا نَعتٌ موجودٌ و لا أجلٌ مَمدودٌ.[108]

Praise be to God, whose attribute has no limit, whose description does not exist, and whose term is not extended.

Several other sermons elaborate on the concept of Waḥdat Bil-Ṣarāfah, also known as the doctrine of the unity of being. This doctrine asserts that God's existence is indivisible and cannot be comprehended as two separate entities. It emphasizes the all-encompassing nature of God's being, stating that no element in the world is not imbued with the divine essence and its attributes. In other words, all creation is ultimately absorbed within God's existence.

The Commander of the Faithful delivered these sermons, and no one understood his words. Avicenna, the philosopher and pride of the East, believed that the unity of God is numerical,[109] and he did not understand Waḥdat Bil-Ṣarāfah.

After a thousand years had passed since the time of the Commander of the Faithful, the meaning of the Waḥdat Bil-Ṣarāfah became known! God is one, and two cannot be assumed in front of Him.

واحدٌ لا بِعدَدٍ قائمٌ لا بِعمَدٍ.

One who does not stand on a number and does not stand on pillars.

In the past, people would recite:

واحدٌ لا بِعَدَدٍ قائمٌ لا بِعَمَدٍ.

One, not by number, standing without pillars; God is standing, but there is no pillar under his feet." They thought God The Exalted was like the celestial spheres, with no pillar under his feet!

Waḥdat al-wujūd (unity of being) is the Only Way to Answer the Doubt of Ibn Kammuna

God is One, but He is not numerically One. The meaning of "unity by essence" was clarified a thousand years after the Commander of the Faithful (Ali) read this sermon; it answered all the doubts of the materialists, Ibn Kammuna, and others.

Imagine two Necessary Beings (Wājib al-wujūd) with infinite attributes, each indistinguishable. One God presides over our world, while the other governs a separate realm. Ibn Kammuna ponders: what theological obstacle arises from this scenario? The elders could not answer this doubt![110]

The failure of some jurists to respond to the doubt of Ibn Kammuna due to their avoidance of the doctrine of Waḥdat al-wujūd

Husayn Khansari, a renowned jurist and scholar, faced a question raised by Ibn Kammuna several centuries ago (approximately 300-400 years). Khansari, the father of the esteemed Jamal Khansari, who authored commentaries on Sharḥ al-Lum' and Haashiyah of Durur wa Ghurur, was considered a leading authority in his field. However, in this instance, he acknowledged the limitations of a specific philosophical approach (Waḥdat al-ṣirāfah) in addressing Ibn Kammuna's doubt. He expressed concern that pursuing this approach might lead to the theological concept of Waḥdat al-wujūd, a viewpoint potentially problematic. Therefore, Khansari opted for a more traditional response, deferring to the pronouncements of the Imams and accepting their teachings through taqlid (imitation). He concluded by simply affirming the oneness of God and suggesting to move on from the doubt.[111]

The central question for monotheistic religions is whether mere imitation of established beliefs constitutes true faith. Passively accepting dogma is inadequate. True faith in a singular God demands a deep understanding of his unique characteristics and a commitment to core religious principles.

To truly know the one God who governs the universe is to grasp the profound reality of his absolute oneness. Therefore, if adherence to established beliefs equates to mere imitation, then the very foundation of these faiths would be undermined.

Here, the Imam is saying:

فَالأمرُ لَکَ وَحدَکَ

The matter is Yours alone.

Everything in this discussion is about Waḥdat (oneness). What do we recite in the Tashahhud?

لا إلهَ إلاّ اللهُ وَحدَهُ.

There is no god but Allah alone.

لا إلهَ إلاّ اللهُ وَحدَهُ لا شَرِیکَ لَهُ.

There is no god but Allah alone; he has no partner.

The concept of oneness is embodied in the phrase "لا شَرِیکَ لَهُ (la sharīka lahu)," which translates to "He has no partners." Therefore, separating these two elements by saying, "There is no god but Allah" followed by "He has no partner" is not ideal. Avoiding a

gap between the interpretation and the one that is interpreted is preferable. The recommendation is to recite the entire phrase as one: "There is no god but Allah, alone, He has no partner," ensuring "alone (وحده)" is understood within the context.

فالأمرُ لَكَ

The matter is Yours.

وَحدَكَ

You are the only one.

لا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

You have no partner.

Where in the realms of existence can we find a partner for You? A fly cannot struggle against Your rule and power, even to the extent of its existence. All its actions, deeds, memories, and paths are the same path You have determined.

من دابة إلا هو آخذ بناصيتها إن ربي على صراط مستقيم.

There is no creature but that He holds it by its forelock. Indeed, my Lord is on a straight path.[112]

و الخَلقُ كُلُّهُم عِيالُكَ.

All of creation is Your dependents.

How many dependents does God have? "dependents" refers to those under one's care and provision. It's important to distinguish this from gender-specific terms. A dependent can be a servant, maid, student, driver, or anyone who receives their livelihood from another.

Following this definition, one could argue that God, as the creator, has all creation as dependents. This encompasses humanity and the natural world – fish, birds, the earth, mountains, and elements like wind and galaxies.

Beyond the physical world, the concept could extend to the unseen realms, including the Barzakh (the intermediate state) and the Malakut (the realm of the divine). All these entities are God's creations.

Exalted God, We, Your creations, humbly acknowledge our dependence on You, the ultimate Provider. We implore You for Your continued blessings. Regardless, we implore You to fulfill our needs through Your immense greatness, generosity, mercy, compassion, and other beautiful attributes. We acknowledge our shortcomings and understand we are not deserving. If You were to wait for our worthiness, we must confess, "Do not hold out hope!" However, we know You as the One of boundless generosity. We trust Your vastness, beseeching You to grant our needs.

Imam Sajjad serves as a guiding light, leading the way forward. We, as his followers, strive to learn from his example. His words are filled with truth, while ours may falter. This is the natural difference between a leader and those who follow. If we could emulate his wisdom and integrity, our endeavors would surely succeed. We acknowledge our shortcomings, but with hope and perseverance, we trust that things will ultimately work out. May our aspirations be achieved through the merits of his guidance rather than through our imperfections.

اللهُمَّ صلِّ علىٰ محمَّد و آل محمَّد

O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.

Session Seventeen
The Mystic's View of the Creation and its Manifestation

أعوذ بالله من الشّيطان الرّجيم
بسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم
و صلّی الله علیٰ محمّدٍ و آلهِ الطّاهرین
و لعنةُ اللهِ علیٰ أعدائهم أجمعین.

The Declaration of the Oneness and Greatness of God in the Words of Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him)

فالأمرُ لکَ وحدکَ لاشریکَ لک، و الخلقُ کلّهُم عیالُک و فی قبضتِک، و کلُّ شیءٍ خاضعٌ لک تبارکتَ یا ربَّ العالمین.

O Lord, You are the One who is unique in Your command, creation, and other attributes of action and essence. You have no partner, neither in Your essence nor in Your name, attribute, or action. Your essence, name, attributes, and actions are all one.

و الخلقُ کلّهُم عیالک.

Oh God, all creation, besides You, relies on Your sustenance. You are their source and their Creator. They depend entirely on Your provision.

و فی قبضتِک.

O God, they are in Your hands of power and the shadow of Your might and majesty.

Everything is subject to You;

و کلُّ شیءٍ خاضعٌ لک.

All beings have come to a state of submission and humility before You,

Because You are powerful and mighty and the Sustainer of them.

تبارکتَ.

You are blessed, exalted, and glorified.

یا ربَّ العالمین.

O Lord of the Worlds.

The proof and argument is with God

إلهی ارحمنی إذا انقطعت حجّتی و کلَّ عن جوابکَ لسانی و طاشَ عندَ سؤالکَ إیّایَ لبّی، فیا عظیمَ رجائی لا تخیّبنی إذا اشتدّت فاقتی، و لا تردّنی لجهلی، و لا تمنعنی لقلّةِ صبری؛ أعطنی لفقری و ارحمنی لضعفی.

O my Lord, God, have mercy on me when my argument is exhausted, and I can no longer offer proof and argument.

This passage suggests humans inherently desire to validate their actions through justification and argument. However, providing such proof is ultimately reserved for the divine. Only God's actions and pronouncements hold absolute truth, including the destinies He ordains for each individual.

و لکَ الحجّةُ علیَّ فی جمیعِ ذلک و لا حجّةَ لی فی ما جریٰ علیَّ فیه قضاؤک.[113]

The ultimate justification lies with You, not with me. The circumstances of my life unfold from a chain of causes set in motion by Your will. Therefore, these events' true rationale and purpose rests entirely with Your wisdom and providence. Any argument I could construct would only contradict Your divine plan. By its very nature, my reasoning would be flawed.

Consequently, the validity of any argument depends solely on the individual's current understanding. New information or a more compelling argument can render an initial justification obsolete. In such cases, the individual must acknowledge their limitations and relinquish their position.

In any dispute, individuals will naturally present arguments in their defense until a more compelling counterpoint emerges. Faced with a stronger argument, the initial position becomes untenable. This suggests that until enlightened by truth, individuals rely on self-justification and biased perspectives to validate their actions. The ego readily constructs a subconscious syllogism to rationalize these actions, driving behavior based on its conclusions. This cycle continues until a more persuasive argument or internal clarity dismantles the constructed justifications. In essence, a stronger argument renders the initial defense invalid.

ایحسب الانسان ان یترک سدی.

[Quran 75:36] 'Does man think he will be left uncontrolled, without purpose?'

A person will inevitably reach a moment of reckoning in his life. All his actions will be meticulously scrutinized and measured against an absolute truth. This truth possesses such immense power that no amount of self-justification or defense can prevail against it. No longer will the individual be able to rationalize his wrongdoings or offer excuses for his shortcomings. In this inescapable confrontation, his arguments will crumble, leaving him utterly speechless.

إلهی ارحمنی إذا انقطعت حجتی.
و کلّ عن جوابک لسانی.

O God, have mercy on me when my argument is cut off and my tongue is too heavy to answer You!

In everyday conversation, we often take for granted the remarkable ability of our language to facilitate communication. Imagine if anxiety rendered the tongue immobile, hindering our capacity to express ourselves.

و طاش عند سؤالک إیای لبی.

When you ask me questions, my reason and my understanding become empty. My core and my intellect lose their power of defense. They become light and cannot defend themselves.

I rely on my heart and the power of my reason in my work. My reason shows me the way and compels me to move on those paths. When you ask me questions, my heart stops working. Our real heart, our perceptions, the center of our perceptions, stops working.

My trust and reliance on Your threshold of mercy, generosity, and kindness is out of helplessness.

فیا عظیم رجائی.

O God, who is my great hope.

لا تخیبنی إذا اشتدت فاقتی.

O God, when my burdens overwhelm me, leaving me utterly powerless; when my mind can no longer offer solutions, my voice falters, and my pleas fall silent, then reach out your hand to me. In that moment of despair, do not forsake me.

و لا تردنی لجهلی.

Do not take me back to my ignorance!

I admit to my ignorance. At this point of questioning, where my whole being is consumed by ignorance, do not put the bridle of ignorance on my neck. Take it in your own hands, overlook my ignorance, and move me forward.

و لا تمنعنی لقلة صبری.

O God, though my patience has faltered, do not abandon me on Your path. Do not leave me behind the caravan that has already set out. They were swift and had reached their resting places and destinations. My patience was lacking, and I lagged. Do not cut me off from Your path; therefore, do not deny me Your blessings.

O Most Merciful of the Merciful. You can take our hands and move us.

أعطِنی لِفَقری وَ ارحَمنی لِضَعفی.

O God. I call upon your grace in my poverty and weakness. As those who lack resources deserve your provision. and those who are vulnerable deserve your compassion. grant me your favor and mercy.

سَیِّدی عَلَیکَ مُعتَمَدی وَ مُعَوَّلی وَ رَجائی وَ تَوَکُّلی، وَ بِرَحمَتِکَ تَعَلُّقی، وَ بِفِنائِکَ أحُطُّ رَحلی، وَ بِجودِکَ أقصِدُ طَلِبَتی، وَ بِکَرَمِکَ أیْ رَبِّ أستَفتِحُ دُعائی، وَ لَدَیکَ أرجو فاقَتی،[114] وَ بِغِناکَ أجبُرُ عَیلَتی، وَ تَحتَ ظِلِّ عَفوِکَ قِیامی، وَ إلیٰ جودِکَ وَ کَرَمِکَ أرفَعُ بَصَری، وَ إلیٰ مَعروفِکَ أُدیمُ نَظَری؛ فَلا تُحرِقنی بِالنّارِ وَ أنتَ مَوضِعُ أمَلی.

Exalted Lord. upon You. rests my dependence. trust. hope. and reliance. Your mercy is my recourse. Your presence my shelter, Your generosity the object of my pursuit. With Your graciousness. O Lord, I initiate my supplication. From You. I await fulfillment. and through Your bounty, I sustain my family. I stand under the shade of Your forgiveness, and to Your generosity and benevolence. I raise my eyes. To Your kindness I constantly direct my gaze; therefore, do not condemn me to the Fire. for You are the foundation of my hope.

سَیِّدی عَلَیکَ مُعتَمَدی وَ مُعَوَّلی وَ رَجائی وَ تَوَکُّلی.

Master, Lord, you are my sole reliance! Without it, I am utterly helpless.

The chandelier's function depends entirely on a secure attachment to the ceiling. Without this critical support. severing the rope and chain would result in a catastrophic fall, inevitably destroying it.

Divine source of strength, I recognize you as my foundation and unwavering support. I implore you to maintain this trust and bolster my faith. May your guidance shape my actions. and may my belief in you be ever-strengthening. You are my hope. my aspiration. In you, I place my unwavering trust. In all matters, I relinquish control and entrust my will to your divine power. So be it.

I cling to Your mercy.

وَ بِرَحمَتِکَ تَعَلُّقی.

I always hold to Your mercy.

أحُطُّ رَحلی.

At Your threshold, I put down my burden.

I am a helpless, tired traveler who has arrived. I put down my burden at the threshold of Your house; I do not put it down anywhere else.

وَ بِجودِکَ أقصِدُ طَلِبَتی.

I have turned to Your generosity and kindness to meet my needs and solve my problems.

وَ بِکَرَمِکَ أیْ رَبِّ أستَفتِحُ دُعائی.

By Your generosity, O Lord, I begin my prayer.

یا کَریمُ یا رَحیمُ یا رَحمانُ.

I begin by saying, 'O Most Generous, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate.' Then I make my supplication, and in that inner and secret prayer, when I have a need, I turn to You with Your mercy and generosity. I reach out to Your generosity in my sirr (the innermost being) and my heart.

وَ لَدَیکَ أرجو فاقَتی.

I turn to You in the hope that my needs and poverty will be rewarded and reach their ultimate destination.

Divine Providence, those who turn to lesser sources in times of want and hardship are ultimately left wanting. Their pleas are in vain, and their lack only deepens. Yet, I bring my needs and poverty before You with unwavering faith that Your infinite bounty will transform them into abundance.

Your abundance compensates for my heavy burden.

و بغناک أجبُرُ عیالی.

By your wealth, I support my burden.

Jaber(جبر) means to mend a broken bone

بکُم یُجبَرُ المَهیض.[115]

It is through you, the Imams, that the broken bone is mended.

The Imams play a crucial role in mending what is broken, symbolically referring to healing and restoring something to its original state. This concept extends beyond physical mending to encompass compensation and rectification in various situations. The term "Jaber" originates from setting a broken bone, where the bone is repaired and returned to its proper condition. By analogy, "Jaber" describes other forms of reparation and compensation. For instance, if torn flesh is stitched together and healed, it is said to be "compensated for." Similarly, when someone is financially reimbursed or a right is restored through goodwill, it is called "Jaber." In essence, " Jaber " means mending or restoring something to its original wholeness, just as a broken bone is set and healed.

The weight of responsibility I carry for my family feels overwhelming. Life's burdens are numerous, and even seemingly simple tasks like travel require significant preparation. The demands of a fulfilling life seem even more daunting. Despite this immense pressure, I find the strength to persevere through the sheer power of your abundance, generosity, and support.

Almighty God, with the arrival of Your generosity and support, my current challenges will seem insignificant. It is said that in the past, certain remedies could mend broken bones within a day. If one relies on Your boundless generosity, it can heal even faster, surpassing human limitations. Your infinite wealth is the source of my strength, allowing me to overcome my burdens.

و تحتَ ظِلِّ عَفوِکَ قیامی.

My standing is under the shadow of your forgiveness.

My existence is dependent on your grace and forgiveness. If it were not for your forgiveness, I would not be standing. I would have fallen and perished and been destroyed.

و إلیٰ جودِکَ و کَرَمِکَ ارفَعُ بصری.

To Your generosity and kindness, I raise my eyes.

When I lift my eyes and fix them and have hope for Your grace, it is only to Your generosity and kindness! It is to your boundless generosity and unwavering kindness that I turn my gaze in hope.

The Meaning of good and evil about the Actions of God

و إلیٰ مَعروفِکَ اُدیمُ نَظَری.

To Your goodness, I keep my gaze

My gaze remains fixed on Your benevolence. The more I contemplate Your goodness, the deeper the joy and satisfaction I experience. This continuous contemplation is a source of constant pleasure, for Your actions are all manifestations of kindness, love, and generosity.

My focus is on Your benevolence, as opposed to actions considered wrong. A good deed is inherently attractive and resonates with people, fostering a sense of connection. Conversely, an evil deed is repulsive and alienates people, driving them away. For instance, consider social interactions. Greeting a friend upon arrival is considered a positive and respectful act, often earning praise. Conversely, staring at someone without acknowledging them is considered rude and off-putting, even repulsive. This exemplifies the difference between good and evil actions.

Lord, Your actions are all expressions of Your benevolence, encompassing kindness, love, grace, and mercy. This inherent goodness is what compels me to contemplate Your works continually. With each reflection, my sense of awe and gratitude deepens, making it impossible to turn away.

The Beauty of God in the Moonlight

Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) performed his ablutions for the night prayer sometime after midnight. Gazing upon the moon high in the sky, he remained captivated by its brilliance until the call to dawn prayer. Its beauty, imbued with the divine, held his gaze. It was the fourteenth night of the lunar cycle, the moon illuminating both the heavens and the earth. As he watched, a profound sense of joy, pleasure, and wonder must have overwhelmed him, persisting until the call to prayer broke the stillness of the night.

إلیٰ مَعروفِکَ أُدیمُ نَظَری.

I keep my gaze on Your goodness.

I keep my gaze fixed on Your goodness. When I contemplate Your benevolence, Your actions, Your kindness – the gentleness You've shown me, the hardships, deaths, and difficulties You've spared me from throughout my life, the dangers You've averted, and the countless blessings You've bestowed upon me – each reflection becomes so captivating that my gaze lingers, unable to tear itself away. Your grace is so captivating and alluring that each instance of Your favor demands my complete attention, leaving no room for distraction. Such is the power of Your remarkable grace.

و لا تُحرِقنی بالنّار، وَ أنتَ موضِعُ أمَلی.[116]

Do not burn me with fire while You are the place of my hope. You are the foundation and axis of my hope. How can You burn me with fire? What fire?

لا تَمنَعنی لِقِلّةِ صَبری، لا تَرُدَّنی بِجَهلی، لا تُخَیِّبنی إذا اشتَدَّت فاقَتی.[117]

Do not turn me away because of my lack of patience, do not reject me because of my ignorance, and do not disappoint me when my need intensifies.

Finding God, the Purpose of Coming into This World

I bear all these afflictions for You. I came here from the realm of malakūt and endured all these hardships for You. Weren't we from that realm?

مرغ باغ ملکوتم نیم از عالم خاک
دو سه روزی قفسی ساخته‌اند از بدنم
من به خود نامدم اینجا که بخود باز روم
آنکه آورده مرا باز برد در وطنم.

No earthly bird, but heavens hold my song,
A borrowed cage, my body weak and wrong.
Here but a breath, I never chose to stay,
A waiting heart for home, far, far away.

همه روز درد من این است و همه شب سخنم
که چرا غافل از احوال دل خویشتنم.[118]
With each rising sun, a sorrow brings anew,
And every night, my whispers turn to sighs.
My heavy heart, a stranger to my view,
Behind a veil of heedlessness, it lies.

تو را ز کنگرهٔ عرش می‌زنند صفیر
ندانمت که در این دامگه چه افتاده است.[119]
From the highest heights, a summons rings so clear,
A call divine that pierces through the sphere.
Yet you, my love, in earthly traps remain,
Entangled deep, where shadows hold their reign.
What binds you here when realms of glory call?
A mystery unfolds beyond my thrall.

Humanity originated from malakūt, a place of perfect peace and tranquility. However, a deeper yearning for God drives our arrival in this world. While malakūt offers an existence free from physical hardship – no sun, heat, hunger, or worldly burdens – it lacks the dynamism necessary for true growth. It's a "stagnant peace" that hinders progress.

The impetus for entering this world is symbolized by a branch of basil, a gift from the divine. Upon experiencing its essence, humanity becomes imbued with a profound love for God. This yearning becomes the driving force behind our earthly existence – a relentless pursuit of divine connection.

Our presence in this world is not random; it is a deliberate journey toward rediscovering God's love, which we first experienced in the realm of malakūt.

من که ملول گشتمی از نفس فرشتگان
قیل و مقال عالمی می‌کشم از برای تو.[120]
Sated by celestial choirs' ethereal sighs,
For you, my love, I crave the world's loud cries.
Their clamorous symphony, a vibrant call,
Surpasses even angels' muted thrall.

In this life, humanity strives to connect with the divine. All our endeavors, struggles and triumphs, material pursuits, and interpersonal connections—marriages, businesses, agriculture, travel—ultimately represent a search for and a yearning to encounter the divine.

The entire world is engaged in this pursuit in its vastness and complexity. All beings instinctively seek this connection, yearning to find the source of meaning and existence. However, many wander astray, lost in fleeting pleasures and worldly distractions, achieving little true fulfillment. Only those who walk the straight path, guided by spiritual wisdom, can truly connect with the divine.

The words of Ibn Sina on the way and perspective of the gnostic

In the Isharat, Bu Ali Sina says:

العارف هش بش بسام يبجل الصغير كما يبجل الكبير و ينبسط من الخامل كما ينبسط من الذبيه.[121]

The gnostic is cheerful, happy, and smiling. He honors the young as he honors the old and is open to the ignorant and the wise.

According to Ibn Sina (Avicenna), a true gnostic is always open and welcoming. They treat everyone with respect and honor, regardless of social standing or intellectual capacity. In other words, a gnostic shows the same deference to those of lesser status as they do to the highly esteemed. Even when approached by someone simple or unlearned, their spirit remains receptive and engaged, just as it would be with a person of great intelligence. Their approach is consistent and impartial.

Ibn Sina (Avicenna) then says:

كيف لا يهش و هو فرحان بالحق.

How can he not be joyful when he is happy with the truth?

How, then, could such a person differentiate between beings? They perceive all creation with an equal eye, for they recognize all beings as God's creations, inherently equal.

This describes the individual who has traversed the straight path. They have navigated the world's complexities and emerged on the other side, attaining their intended destination within this intricate existence.

The Underlying Force of Existence: Love

The essence lies in the journey, for a yearning for the divine drives all beings. Regardless of religious affiliation—Christian, Jewish, materialist, or polytheist—the act of waking up and going to work—a shopkeeper tending their store—can be interpreted as a search for the divine.

This search permeates every aspect of daily life. It is present in the morning routine, in interactions with customers, and in the act of work itself. Hunger pangs during lunch become a reminder of the divine; even sleep is seen as a form of seeking. Every step throughout the day, from morning to night, reflects this fundamental drive.

This longing is not limited to humans; it extends to all living beings. The very movement of the celestial spheres is said to be driven by love, and all creation is set in motion by this powerful and universal force.

و أنت موضع أملي.

You are the source of my hope; O God, You are the foundation of my desire!

The Torment of Separation Far Exceeds Any Earthly Fire!

I have endured these hardships willingly, for Your sake, to find favor in Your eyes, and ultimately to return to You. Otherwise, I would never have left that idyllic realm – a world perpetually bathed in the shade of verdant trees, a paradise devoid of discomfort, hunger, or want.

جنات تجري من تحتها الانهار.[122]

We would not have chosen to experience these earthly trials! But having embarked on this path, I implore You: Do not subject me to the agonizing fire of Your estrangement, do not withhold Your mercy from me, and do not deny me the privilege of *qurb*(closeness to You).

Every level of separation carries with it its torment. The inferno that burns within the heart far surpasses the intensity of any external fire.

The anguish of a mother whose child is gravely ill or deceased manifests as a consuming fire within her heart. No external comfort can extinguish this internal torment. Even surrounded by luxuries – the finest food, the most elegant attire,

breathtaking destinations, and extravagant journeys – the fire continues to blaze. Such is the intensity of this emotional inferno that the mother may become oblivious to physical pain. Instances exist where she might even suffer burns without registering the sensation, the emotional fire eclipsing all external stimuli.

□ Consider a brightly lit mosque with a powerful 1000-watt bulb. Even if you light a small 2-volt candle next to it, would the candle's light be noticeable compared to the bulb's brilliance? Similarly, the fire burning within this mother's heart for her child is so intense and consuming that any external fire pales in comparison.

This internal fire is a manifestation that exists across all realms. The fire itself embodies an aspect of hell. True hell, however, is reserved for the 'expelled' – those who are distant from God. In the realm of ' qurb' (nearness to God), there is no hell; only paradise exists. Therefore, the closer one is to God, the stronger the paradise experience becomes. Conversely, the further one is from God, the stronger the experience of hell becomes. The varying degrees of nearness to God and remoteness to Him determine the levels of paradise and hell, respectively.

وَ لا تُحرِقنی بِالنّار.

And do not burn me in the fire. You are the foundation of my desire, the axis of my hope, the focus of the goal of my movement, and the destination of my journey!

وَ لا تُسکِنّی الهاوِیَة.

And do not make me dwell in the pit of Hell,

Nor cast me among Your enemies, and do not separate me from Your friends and in the world of Your distance!

فاِنَّکَ قُرَّةُ عَینی.

O God, You are the radiance of my Eyes!

The remembrance of You brings solace to my heart. When I call You to my mind, it cools my eyes, which have become inflamed and burning from separation. It restores light to eyes that have grown dim.

یا سَیِّدی لا تُکَذِّب ظَنّی بِاِحسانِکَ و مَعروفِکَ.

O my Lord, let not my faith in Your benevolence and generosity be misplaced.

Grant that my trust in Your goodness does not lead to despair. My belief is founded on truth; should disappointment befall me, it would cast doubt upon that truth. Do not allow this to happen, but strengthen my conviction, validate it, and transform it into unshakeable certainty.

فَاِنَّکَ ثِقَتی.

For You are my trust! I have no one else to trust but You.

و لا تَحرِمنی ثَوابَک.
فاِنَّکَ العارِفُ بِفَقری.

Do not deprive me of Your reward, for You are the Knower of my poverty.

Exalted God, the depths of my poverty and need are hidden. They see only the outward appearance, like any other person. But You, O All-Knowing, penetrate the secrets of my heart. Therefore, I direct my supplications to You alone, for You understand the full measure of my lack. You are the Knower of my needs and perceive the true extent of my deficiencies.

Before the Most Generous God, a sinful servant has confessed his sins to draw closer to Him.

إلهی إن کان قَد دَنا أجَلی و لم یُقَرِّبنی مِنکَ عَمَلی فقد جَعَلتُ الإعتِرافَ إلیکَ بِذَنبی وَسائِلَ عِلَلی.

O God, if my death has drawn near and my deeds have not brought me closer to You, then I have confessed my sins to You as a means of my excuse.

O God, we have dedicated our lives to seeking Your presence, yet our actions may not have brought us closer to You. As our mortality becomes evident, and if our deeds fall short of achieving closeness to You, I offer one final act: confessing my sins. I acknowledge my transgressions and humbly present this confession as a plea for Your forgiveness.

Our lives are nearing their end, and we stand before You with little to show for ourselves. We openly admit our guilt and failings. Our transgressions were not born out of arrogance, defiance, or denial of Your existence. We acknowledge our ignorance as the root of our sins and confess them fully. We implore You to accept our sincere apology.

We are but humble servants burdened by sin, while You are the embodiment of divine Mercy. As with all things, an opposing force exists: Day yields to night, white contrasts black, and sweetness finds its counterpoint in bitterness. You, the Most Generous, stand in stark contrast to us, Your sinful servants. You are the source of all good while we embody imperfection. We cannot claim divinity, for true divinity is inherently good.

Therefore, O God, please do not expect more from us than this humble confession. We, finite creations, are incapable of achieving the purity of gold. You are the true gold, while we are mere imitations adorned with a superficial sheen. We have borrowed a fleeting reflection of Your divine light to cloak our imperfections. We may perform acts in this world under the pretense of righteousness, but when the veil is lifted and we face the ultimate test, our true nature will be revealed. The base metal beneath the facade –iron, cast iron, or any other – will be exposed. It will be revealed for what it truly is, lacking the purity of true gold.

Let us not be mistaken in believing otherwise! We are limited beings, created with inherent imperfections and constraints. You, however, possess the ultimate attributes and glorious names. We are not worthy of our merit. Only through the spark of Your divine grace from the unseen realm are we ignited with love and devotion for You. Despite our limitations and the fragility of our existence, we strive with all our being to reach out to You. Yet, the vast gulf between our earthly limitations and Your infinite majesty remains. We acknowledge the disparity between our humble selves and Your divine essence.

The presence of desire within a person signifies their potential to achieve their goal.

Your immense grace draws us closer to You. This grace is entirely Yours, not something we can claim credit for. We readily admit this. May our sincere confession serve as a bridge to reach You.

The spark that has ignited from the unseen realm is setting us on the path of seeking You. May it continue to guide us along that very path! If we could not reach You, this spark would not have ignited, nor would this yearning have arisen.

Every desire within a human being is a sign and symbol that they possess the potential to achieve that goal. Otherwise, the desire itself wouldn't exist. The capacity to reach it is absent in a being devoid of such desire. However, in humans who do possess this desire, it is evident that there is a potential for something greater.

True forgiveness belongs to the one who has the power to take revenge

إلهی إن عَفَوتَ فمَن أولیٰ مِنکَ بالعَفو.[123]

O God, if You grant forgiveness, who is more worthy of offering it than You?

True forgiveness originates from a position of strength. When someone without power forgives, it may appear out of helplessness, a mere concession due to a lack of options. However, when the one with the power to exact retribution chooses forgiveness instead, that act becomes a genuine display of magnanimity and mercy.

Therefore, forgiveness is most commendable when bestowed by a powerful and generous being. Who possesses greater power and generosity than You, O Almighty God? If You choose to forgive, it is not a deviation from Your divine nature but a confirmation of Your merciful and forgiving essence. This act of forgiveness is most praiseworthy and exemplifies Your glorious attributes.

لا تُؤاخِذنا بِعَدلِک.

Do not hold us accountable by Your perfect justice, O Lord!

If You grant us forgiveness, Your mercy will be a great blessing. Even if You choose to inflict punishment, You remain sinless, for You act according to Your justice.[124] You have issued Your commands, and we have disobeyed as Your humble servants. The punishment we face is a just consequence of our actions. However, we implore You to treat us not with the full measure of Your justice but with Your boundless forgiveness! In its absolute form, justice is a burden beyond our capacity. If we were to be judged solely by the weight of Your perfect justice, the outcome would be disastrous.

و لو یواخذ الله الناس بظلمهم ما ترک علیها من دابه.

If God were to take people to account for their wrongdoing, not a single creature would be left on the face of the earth. (Quran, 16:61)

Is there a single soul on this Earth who has never transgressed? Injustice can be inflicted upon others or oneself in grand or subtle ways. No living being is entirely faultless. Therefore, You, O God, are not swift to punish. You do not seize humanity for every sin or transgression. Instead, Your forgiveness reigns supreme.

Furthermore, Your justice aligns perfectly with Your lofty station. You are the embodiment of Greatness and Majesty. Your decree states that those who disobey must face consequences. This is not a sign of vindictiveness but a reflection of Your inherent justice.

The Eternal Dominance of God's Mercy and Beauty over His Wrath and Majesty

Forgiveness belongs to the realm of Beauty and the station of Mercy and Kindness. As the supplication goes,

یا مَن سَبَقَت رَحمَتُهُ غَضَبَه.[125]

O He whose Mercy precedes His Wrath; always Your Mercy precedes Your Wrath!

Whenever these two attributes clash, Your Mercy intervenes and extinguishes Your Wrath! This is the very essence of Your nature.

Water in this world serves as a manifestation of Your Mercy. Fire, on the other hand, embodies Your consuming wrath. But can water and fire coexist side-by-side? No, water intervenes and extinguishes the fire, leaving no trace of its fury. Fire only rages, blazes, screams, and sparks where there is no water. It hisses and roars, but when water is present, it leaves no trace.

Exalted God, You embody justice and forgiveness, wrath and mercy, majesty and beauty. Through our understanding, Your beauty surpasses Your majesty. Your beauty

draws us closer and compels us towards You like a radiant smile. In Your presence, the call of distant majesty fades, replaced by an invitation to approach. Treat us, then, with Your infinite forgiveness.

اَللّهُمَّ لا تُؤاخِذنا بِعَدلِک!
إلهی إن عَفَوتَ فَمَن أولی مِنکَ بِالعَفو، وَ إن عَذَّبتَ فَمَن أعدَلُ مِنکَ فِی الحُکم.

O God, if You choose to forgive, who is more worthy of granting forgiveness than You? If You decree punishment, who can deliver judgment with greater justice?

Justice is also based on the firmness of work!

اِرحَم فی هذه الدُّنیا غُربَتی وَ عِندَ المَوتِ کُربَتی.

Have mercy on my loneliness in this world and my sorrow at death!

The Illusions of the Material World and the Human Quest for the Divine

In this earthly realm, I feel like a stranger, utterly alone. The beings that populate this world, with whom we all form bonds, ultimately serve their interests. Though they may appear friendly, they are not truly allies. Every interaction we have, every object we possess, creates a form of attachment. Homes, animals, possessions – all these connections bind us to the material world. Yet, these attachments are ultimately temporary and fleeting. Like a sacrificial camel used for a specific purpose, they are discarded once their usefulness is gone. This is the harsh reality of the material world.

However, I am not merely of this world. Like every human being, I carry a divine spark, a connection to the realm of the malakūt. We yearn to maintain this connection, even as the allure of the material world seeks to claim us. We must constantly strive to transcend our earthly limitations and return to our true essence, a part of the being of Truth. All the temptations and desires of the material world beckon us to succumb to their sway, promising a sense of power and control. But these are illusions, ultimately leading us away from our true purpose.

This path signifies a transcendence of earthly existence. Consequently, all worldly beings become obstacles for the seeker. Even a stone in the desert stands in opposition, for the gnostic strives to move in unison with God, while the stone clings to its existence, inherent qualities, and desire for self-preservation. Similarly, the bird insists on its continued existence, and the wall seeks to maintain its structural integrity. Each claims a distinct personality. However, the gnostic asserts that all individual identities must be subsumed within the ultimate reality of God. There is only one true personality, and it belongs to the Divine. This call to surrender one's ego inevitably creates resistance in all who hear it.

Why did such an uproar erupt when the Prophet proclaimed the call of 'la ilaha ill-Allah' (there is no god but Allah), and why did all of Arabia become hostile towards him?[126] Was it a provocative statement? The reason lies within the profound meaning of 'la ilaha ill-Allah.' It signifies the absolute renunciation of everything. One must sever all attachments to everything in existence, from Mount Abu Qubais to the mountains of Tihamah, the gardens of Ta'if, and everything else. All earthly ties must be severed, and one must turn exclusively to God, as the Quranic verse indicates: '...and turn to Him with a complete turning' (Quran 2:113).

وتبتل إليه تبتيلا.[127]

This is no simple feat; it is a monumental challenge!

Therefore, the one who raises this call stands alone, a stranger in a world clinging to its attachments.

اِرحَم فی هذه الدُّنیا غُربَتی.

O God, have mercy on my loneliness in this world!

O God, do not leave me a stranger. Even if you reconcile me with every being in the world, I am still a stranger without You.

Help me find peace with all beings. When do we truly make peace with all creation? When we make peace with You. Through You, we recognize all beings; by opening the path to You, we open the path to all. When we know You, we understand all beings; when we find the way to You, we find the way to all. All beings that were once enemies become friends, companions! Duality dissolves, replaced by unity. These beings, dependent on the True Essence's existence, connect with humanity not from a place of self-interest but from their inherent connection to You. The enmity they once held transforms into friendship.

The Need for God's Mercy in the World at the Time of Death and After

ارحَم فی هذه الدّنیا غُربتی و عِندَ المَوتِ کُربتی.

Have mercy on my loneliness in this world and my distress at the time of death.

In their final moments, some individuals experience emotional distress due to unresolved attachments. In such cases, may God show them mercy.

Instead of a single basil branch, could two be presented? One would symbolize Your Majesty, and the other, Your Beauty. May the fragrance of these branches bring about a peaceful detachment for the individual, allowing them to transition serenely into Your presence.[128]

وَ فی القَبرِ وَحدتی.

In the Grave, I Am Alone.

In the world of the grave, a world of unity, attend to my loneliness! There, I am utterly alone. No one comes to my aid: neither father, mother, tribe, nor wealth. No one! They lay the human body to rest, cover it with dust, strike a shovel over it, recite the Fatiha [Islamic prayer for the deceased], and leave. They abandon me completely.

و فی اللّحدِ وَحشتی.

In the niche, when they have placed me, have mercy on my terror there!

وإذا نُشِرتُ لِلحسابِ بَینَ یَدَیکَ ذُلَّ مَوقفی.

When I stand before You for the reckoning, my position will be one of utter humility.

Have mercy on the humiliated and helpless position I have before You!

That moment of reckoning will be unlike anything we have ever experienced! We will stand before the ultimate Authority, the All-Powerful. Whatever He decrees, commands, or forbids will be absolute truth. Humanity will be utterly humbled, called upon to answer for its entire life: every fleeting thought, every misguided idea, every wrong action. Here, O Divine One, we implore Your mercy! In that moment, human beings will truly require Your compassion.

We might mistakenly believe that Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) cries out and beseeches God solely to instruct us. However, his profound knowledge and spiritual insight allow him to see the stages and challenges on the path to the afterlife. He recognizes that we, as humans, must seek God's guidance and strive for self-correction to navigate these obstacles successfully.[129]

May God grant us success and awaken us, and before we die, may He always remind us of repentance, good deeds, and the remembrance of death so that we may not become arrogant!

The Prophet said:

أكثِروا ذِكرَ هادِمِ اللّذّات.[130]

Mention frequently the destroyer of pleasures.

People asked, "What is the destroyer of pleasures?" The Prophet said, "Death."

اَللهُمّ صلّ على محمّد و آل محمّد.

O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.

Session Eighteen

Explanation of the state of man after death and the necessity of man's preparation before death

أعوذ بالله من الشّيطان الرّجيم
بسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم
و صلّى الله على محمّد و آله الطّاهرين
و لعنة الله على أعدائهم أجمعين

The Concealment of the Lord's Sins

و اغفِر لی ما خَفِیَ علی الآدمیّین من عملی، و أدِم لی ما بِهِ سَتَرتَنی، و ارحمنی صریعًا علی الفراش تُقَلِّبُنی أیدی أحِبَّتی، و تَفَضَّل علیَّ ممدودًا علی المُغتَسَل یُقَلِّبُنی صالِحُ جیرتی، و تَحَنَّن علیَّ محمولاً قد تَناوَلَ الأقرباءُ أطرافَ جِنازتی، و جُد علیَّ منقولاً قد نَزَلتُ بِکَ وحیدًا فی حُفرتی، و ارحم فی ذلکَ البیتِ الجدیدِ غُربتی حتّی لا أستأنسَ بغیرِکَ.

O God, forgive me; overlook and disregard what has been hidden from humanity concerning my actions. These are the shameful and flawed deeds that I have committed, known only to You and me. By Your mercy, You have concealed them and kept them from the eyes of others under the veil of Your protection. Forgive them all.

و أدِم لی ما بِهِ سَتَرتَنی.

O God, continue this veil You have drawn over our actions and this cover You have cast over our sins. Let it not cease at any limit nor be confined to a specific measure. Grant that Your concealment may persist, just as You veiled them initially. Look with Your initial mercy upon me and continue on this path until all my hidden deeds remain hidden. For if You were to reveal them, it would be a calamity.

The Absolute Weakness of Man at the Hour of Death

و ارحمنی صریعًا علی الفراش تُقَلِّبُنی أیدی أحِبَّتی.

Have mercy on me when I lie helpless on my sickbed, turned from side to side by the hands of my loved ones. Have mercy on me at the very hour of death, when I am prostrate on my deathbed!

The word Ṣarī'(صريع) describes a state of complete physical helplessness. Imagine being struck down, unable to rise, and devoid of the strength to even turn in bed. In such a state, one utterly relies on caring for loved ones – family and relatives – who must turn them and assist with even the most basic movements. It is a state that compels one to seek mercy, for before experiencing such weakness, there was a tendency to rely on oneself and worldly strength. Blinded by pride, one mistakenly believed that all power came from within and thus failed to seek divine compassion.

The State of Man at the Time of Death

The boundary between this world and the next blurs as we approach our final moments. In that liminal space, the veil is lifted, revealing the impermanence of all bestowed upon us. The power, knowledge, and life we once took for granted are recognized as gifts emanating from a divine source. This realization dawns with the stark clarity of the midday sun. Once illuminating our earthly form, the light of divine favor begins to recede.

حتی إذا بلغ اشده.

Until he reaches his full strength. (Quran 46:15)

With its withdrawal, the essence of who we are – a physical vessel animated by a spark of divinity – becomes increasingly apparent. Moment by moment, we witness the gradual dismantling of all loans to us. This process continues relentlessly until we

reach a state of complete dissolution, where nothing remains but the bare essence of our being.

The faculties that once empowered us – the strength that propelled us through life's endeavors, the ability to traverse the vast expanse of the world – now dwindle to a mere ember. We, who once moved with purpose and might, are reduced to utter dependence. Even the most straightforward act of turning in bed necessitates the assistance of loved ones, a poignant reminder of our vulnerability.

أيدی احبتی.

The hands of my loved ones [must help me].

The Meaning of Sakarat

In a heartfelt plea, I pray for God's mercy, acknowledging the immense need for it during the throes of death. "sakarat," a state of overwhelming distress, confusion, and disorientation, overwhelms me.

Sakarat (the agony of death) is described as so severe that it induces a near-delirious state akin to intoxication. The individual's faculties diminish, rendering them incapable of rational thought or action. The body weakens, and life ebbs away, causing immense physical pain. Life's memories, both good and bad, flood the mind. The individual reflects on actions taken and consequences faced. The unknown nature of the afterlife and the lack of preparation for it creates immense anxiety, and the dying person contemplates parting with loved ones and the life they built. The realization dawns that all earthly accomplishments are fleeting and offer no solace in this transition.

The combined effect of these factors plunges the individual into a state of mental and emotional turmoil, aptly described as "sakarat."

يأيها الناس اتقوا ربكم إن زلزلة الساعة شيء عظيم .

O people, fear your Lord! The earthquake of the Hour is a terrible thing. (Quran 22:1)

This verse from the Quran warns people of the Day of Judgment, which will be a time of great upheaval and destruction. The earthquake of the Hour will be so powerful that it will cause pregnant women to miscarry and nursing mothers to forget their children.

The Beginning of the Resurrection with the Entry into the World of Barzakh

Death is also a minor resurrection, in contrast to the significant resurrection. The Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his family) said, "When someone dies, their resurrection is established."[131] This means that entering the world of Barzakh is the beginning of the resurrection, and this is where the state of sakarat (the agony of death) comes from. Sakarat is not only due to the severity of the illness, but that is also a factor. The thoughts that come to the dying person due to the events that have been mentioned also cause them to lose consciousness.

I see all my accumulated knowledge being consigned to oblivion, and I cannot take it with me. Because all this knowledge is material, it is used to build up the world and this life. When the foundation of this world is destroyed, the values and effects that belong to this world are also destroyed. Man can no longer carry the knowledge of the world of values to the world of reality. Each of these worlds has its special effects and properties.

The Uselessness of the Itibārāt of the Material World After Death

This world's material values (itibārāt) belong to the realm of the contingent (itibār) and do not accompany an individual beyond death. Their domain is limited to life. For

instance, the most learned person of their era may possess immense knowledge until their demise, but it is no longer theirs upon death. Similarly, worldly possessions, power, and influence are all relinquished.

تجارة تخشون كسادها ومساكن ترضونها.[132]

Throughout life, every person undergoes a natural progression within the material realm. They accumulate power, achieve greatness, and attain positions of authority. However, all these worldly aspects – wealth, family ties, social standing, material possessions, and even the fear of financial hardship or attachment to comfortable dwellings – are subject to decay and decline. These once-valued aspects inevitably wane with time, culminating in their ultimate demise. As this individual approaches the precipice of death, their worldly significance dwindles, ultimately reaching a state of absolute insignificance.

و ارحمني صريعًا على الفراش تقلبني أيدي أحبتي.

And have mercy on me when I am lying helpless on the bed, turned from side to side by the hands of my loved ones. Have mercy on me when they pour water into my mouth and pull my hand out from under my body because I can no longer do it myself!

و تفضل علي ممدودًا على المغتسل يقلبني صالح جيرتي.

O God, be kind to me, be merciful to me, be generous to me, at the time when I am placed on the stone of the washing room, and my corpse is stretched out there. When those good neighbors who have come to my funeral are busy washing my corpse and turning me from side to side. One pours water, and one washes me, turning me from side to side so that the water reaches all parts of my body.

O God, I was the person who had power in this world, but there I am, devoid of all power. My corpse is lying on the ground at the hands of righteous neighbors and friends who are performing ghusl or washing my corpse. Be kind, and do not leave me alone, for I need your help!

Description of the state of the deceased during the funeral procession

و تحنن علي محمولًا قد تناول الأقرباء أطراف جنازتي.

Have mercy on me while I am being carried when my relatives have taken hold of the sides of my coffin. Have mercy on me and show me compassion when I am placed on the bier and my loved ones are carrying me.

They are about to take me away and bury me in the ground. They will dig a hole in the ground, place me inside, and cover me up with dirt. They will turn around and leave me there to be devoured by the earth.

Have mercy on me when I am being carried! What kind of mercy? After all, the person being carried is only a body. His soul is awake and is moving above his coffin, crying out:

رب ارجعون* لعلي أعمل صلحا فيما تركت.

O my Lord, send me back! So that I may do good work on what I have left behind!

The response is:

كلا.

"Never!" It is impossible to return.

إنها كلمة هو قائلها ومن ورائهم برزخ إلى يوم يبعثون.[133]

Behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected.

This individual previously expressed similar desires, pleading to be revived with promises of reform ("Bring me back! I will do it again! Save me from this disease! Save me from that trouble! I will make amends!"). However, despite our intervention, those promises remained unfulfilled.[134]

What lies ahead of him is a barrier until the Day of Resurrection. In that barrier, which is the gap between the material world and the world of pure abstraction, he must wait in the world of form until "يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ-the Day they are raised."

In the moment of transition, as I am carried forth, I witness those around me, alive and possessing the precious gift of time to rectify their deeds. This opportunity, however, has been severed from me. I am propelled onward on a path with no return. My potential lies unfulfilled, and my capacity for action is extinguished. The reckoning has begun. I yearn most fervently for Your love and solace in this profound vulnerability. Do not forsake me, O God, in this critical hour!

وَجُدْ عَلَيَّ مَنقولاً قَدْ نَزَلْتُ بِكَ وَحِيداً فِي حُفْرَتِي.
قَدْ نَزَلْتُ بِكَ وَحِيداً.

Upon being lowered into the grave, grant me Your grace, O God. For I descend to You in solitude, entrusted entirely to Your care.

My body rests within the confines of the grave, yet my essence, my soul, stands alone before You. It carries no worldly companionships or comforts, for those it held dear in life cannot accompany it here. Within this realm, there is no familiar face but Yours.

Having arrived in solitude, it pleads with You: Grant it solace; do not abandon it. Loneliness and isolation are the most grievous burdens; those who endure them only grasp their true weight. To find oneself utterly estranged, a stranger in every direction, is a plight beyond comprehension for those who have not yet experienced it.

وَارْحَمْ فِي ذَلِكَ الْبَيْتِ الْجَدِيدِ غُرْبَتِي.

Grant me Your mercy in that new and unfamiliar dwelling, for I enter it alone.

The grave is a place unlike any other, a destination no living soul has ever visited. No one has entered its depths and returned to tell the tale – not in the way that matters here, experiencing its unique qualities and enduring its effects. It is a new house; I will be a stranger within its walls.

Certain provisions must be sent from the earthly world to find solace and make this new abode habitable. One needs the light of good deeds, the steady flow of righteousness, a door secured by faith, and the key of unwavering devotion.

Without these preparations, the dangers of that dwelling place would be immense. It becomes a vulnerable space, exposed to the darkness of sin and the terrors of consequence. Just as a broken door allows entry to wild beasts and thieves, a life devoid of virtue invites suffering and despair.

To prepare the dwelling place of the hereafter, piety and righteous actions serve as indispensable forerunners.

Should one wish to make that abode welcoming, an agent must be dispatched from this life to ensure its readiness. This envoy is tasked with repairs, addressing vulnerabilities, ensuring a steady flow of good works ("electricity"), maintaining a clear conscience ("meter"), providing spiritual sustenance ("water"), and creating a foundation of faith ("bed"). Only then will one be called upon to enter.

Piety and righteous deeds are the very agents one must send forth. Neglecting this duty leaves the abode a stranger, a place of utter alienation.

There exists a dwelling place beyond this world from which there is no migration. Unlike earthly abodes, dissatisfaction offers no escape. One cannot utter, "I shall acquire a new residence" or "Seek refuge elsewhere." Complaints of unfavorable location, unpleasant climate, or undesirable neighbors hold no sway.

This dwelling, I emphasize, is the house of actuality. Sealed upon a person's soul, it remains immutable. The soul's state at the moment of death determines its form. Virtues, accomplishments, flaws, and transgressions shape the individual's eternal destination. Once established, this abode becomes unalterable.

وَ ارحَم فی ذَلِکَ البَیتِ الجَدیدِ غُربَتی.

O God, have mercy on my loneliness in this new house.

The essence of God is the only companion of the monotheists in the world of the grave

حَتّی لا أستَأنِسَ بِغَیرِکَ.

So that I may not find solace in anyone other than You.

O my Master, O my God, O my Lord, grant me a kind of mercy that I may not have familiarity with anyone other than You.

Imagine a child throwing a tantrum. A parent might offer a toy as a temporary distraction. Similarly, God might offer solace in the grave through external means. However, O God, do not let such things distract me! Grant me companions that deepen my connection to You. Let not the Day of Judgment arrive until I have fully experienced Your closeness!

The line 'I may not find comfort in anything other than You., O God' signifies the complete realization of monotheism in all its forms: essential, active, attributive, and nominal. It means I perceive everything as emanating from God's light and presence. No being exists outside of the divine radiance.

In every encounter, whether with the questioning angels (Munkar and Nakir) in the grave, the inhabitants of Paradise or Hell whose doors open within the grave, or even the figures of reward or heavenly gifts that appear as manifestations of good deeds – I see only reflections of the divine. I cannot find true companionship except in connection with the divine.

I pray for You to begin the new line with this concept, emphasizing the elimination of my loneliness in that house solely through familiarity with You.

Perdition is the fruit of self-reliance

یا سَیِّدی إن وَکَلتَنی إلی نَفسی هَلَکتُ! سَیِّدی فَبِمَن أستَغیثُ إن لَم تُقِلنی عَثرَتی؟

O my Lord, I will perish if You abandon me to myself! O my Lord, to whom shall I cry for help if You do not lift me from my stumbling?

The human nafs constantly tempts man towards falsehood and pride. When man forgets God, the nafs becomes even more powerful and dangerous. Man will surely fail if he relies on strength to fight the nafs. Only with God's help can man overcome the evil of his nafs.

The fruit of reliance on the Lord is a movement towards truth

If God himself takes hold of the reins of a man's life, his spiritual transformation is assured. This signifies that the nafs (ego) is subdued and powerless by God's will. It becomes completely compliant, like a humble and submissive servant standing before its master. The man's desires are effortlessly fulfilled, and the nafs actively assists him in his endeavors. This, however, is contingent upon the man surrendering his control and trusting in God's guidance. As the supplication expresses, 'O my Lord, if You abandon me to myself, I am utterly lost!

سَیِّدی إن وَکَلتَنی إلی نَفسی هَلَکتُ.

Clinging to the Lord's mercy is the only way to escape the pitfalls.

سَيِّدي فَبِمَن أستَغيثُ إن لَم تُقِلني عَثرَتي؟

O my Lord, O my Master! If You do not forgive my mistakes and keep me from falling, and if You do not take my hand when I am about to stumble and fall face down, to whom shall I cry for help? To whom shall I turn for refuge (when it has become clear to me that there is no refuge except You)? So I cannot turn to anyone but You because everything other than You is false; I have realized that no one else can help me!

If You do not keep me from falling, if You do not look upon me with Your mercy so that I do not fall into those pitfalls, to whom shall I cry for help?!

There are countless pitfalls in this world, and we cannot escape them alone. Only God can save us.

The Lord's grace is man's only refuge in the world of the grave

فَإلى مَن أفزَعُ إن فَقَدتُ عِنايَتَكَ في ضَجعَتي؟

To whom shall I turn if I am deprived of Your grace in my grave? Who will be my refuge and shelter?

In the solitude of the grave, only God's grace offers solace. Without it, who can I call upon for refuge or comfort?

As I lay myself down to slumber, a harbinger of the final rest, my unwavering hope turns to You, Lord. Throughout my earthly journey, I have beseeched You. Now, on the precipice of eternity, where potential yields to reality, Your grace is more vital than ever. To whom could I turn in that unknown expanse if it were to recede? Where would I find solace? Only You, Lord, can hear the silent pleas of my soul in that uncharted realm.

Man's need for the life-giving breaths of Truth in the tribulations of the world of the grave

وَ إلى مَن ألتَجِئُ إن لَم تُنَفِّس كُربَتي؟

To whom shall I turn if You do not relieve my grief?

If You do not give me a fresh breath from that sorrow and grief that is choking my soul and suffocating me, to whom shall I turn?

□ The evocative metaphor of "breath that gives life" aptly captures the essence of profound sorrow. Kurbah (كربة), a term signifying deep grief and anguish, can be so overpowering that it induces a sense of suffocation. This phenomenon finds a parallel in the physical realm. Extreme fear can trigger a constriction of the lungs, akin to choking. In such critical circumstances, oxygen becomes paramount – a literal "breath of life" – to prevent succumbing to death.

You are the source of my strength and solace. In moments of despair, you breathe new life into my spirit, offering hope and renewal even in the face of immense hardship and on the brink of death and destruction!

Without your sustaining presence, I am lost in the darkness of separation from you. In the silence of the grave, to whom can I turn? Who will hear my cries of isolation? You are my only refuge.

The Exclusivity of the Path and Our Need for God

سَيِّدي مَن لي و مَن يَرحَمُني إن لَم تَرحَمني و فَضلَ مَن أُؤَمِّلُ إن عَدِمتُ فَضلَكَ يَومَ فاقَتي و إلى مَنِ الفِرارُ مِنَ الذُّنوبِ إذا انقَضى أجَلي.

O my Master, O my Lord! Who is there for me? No one! Who will have mercy on me if you do not have mercy on me? And whose favor and grace can I hope for and expect if you deprive me of your favor and generosity on the day of my poverty and need? To whom can I turn? From whom can I ask for a favor? To which source of generosity and grace can I turn and ask?

Is it conceivable that there is any favor other than Your favor, any generosity other than Your generosity? So my path is entirely towards You, and I ask You because I know no one else exists.

The Meaning of 'Ajal' in the Phrase of the Imam

وَ إِلَى مَنِ الْفِرَارُ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ إِذَا انْقَضَى أَجَلِي.

Where is the refuge from sins when my appointed time is reached?

In the face of my mortality, where can I find refuge from the consequences of my actions?

The word ajal (أجل) has two meanings in this context. It can refer to the entirety of a person's lifespan, from beginning to end, or it can signify the specific moment of death, the endpoint of the lifespan.

The Imam emphasizes the latter meaning. He highlights the urgency of seeking forgiveness before our time runs out. If we reach the end of our "ajal" with sins still burdening us, we will have no one to turn to for help.

The Story of the Unjust Sultan's End, as Narrated by the Late Ansari (May God Be Pleased with Him)

The late scholar Ansari (may he rest in peace) recounted a story from Hamadan. A funeral procession moved towards the cemetery, carrying the body of a former ruler notorious for his cruelty. A large crowd followed, but according to Ansari, a more unsettling sight awaited.

The deceased's spirit, his "angelic face," sat upon the coffin, desperately trying to cry out, "O God, save me!" However, Ansari emphasized a chilling detail - the spirit could not utter "God." In front of him lay an endless, suffocating darkness, unlike the finite boundaries of a pool or pond. This oppressive darkness represented the uncertain fate awaiting the unjust ruler.

Facing Mortality: Cultivating Inner Dialogue

The concept of being prepared for death is a significant one across many cultures. Without a connection to the divine established in this life, the ability to speak will be denied in the afterlife. Without that speech, one cannot answer the questions of Munkar and Nakir (the angels who question the dead).

The essence of the message lies not in physical dialogue but in the inner voice. It is this internal dialogue that will truly matter in the hereafter. If a person cultivates a meaningful connection with their spiritual core during their life, this inner voice will continue to resonate after death. However, even the most eloquent outward expression will be useless if this connection remains undeveloped. In that state, the inner voice may be described as muted, powerless, or absent altogether.

Mr. Ansari said that the deceased individual desperately wished to cry out for help. He yearned to plead with God for salvation ("O God, save me!") but could not speak. Turning to the crowd, he then desperately called out to them for assistance, "O Muslims! Save me". However, tragically, no one present seemed to comprehend his pleas. None were able to hear his silent cries.

وَ إلى مَن الفِرارُ مِنَ الذُّنوبِ إذا انقَضى أجَلي.

To whom shall I flee from my sins when my time is up and they say. 'In the name of God, enter!'?

The Exclusivity of Hope and Aspiration in the Lord

سَيِّدي لا تُعَذِّبني و أنا أرجوكَ.

My Master, do not torment me while I am hoping in You!

O God, my Master, You are the One! We have complete devotion to a single divine entity. In times of difficulty, just as servants seek refuge with their masters, individuals naturally turn to a higher authority for comfort and protection. This parallels the way children seek solace from their parents when facing challenges.

سَيِّدي لا تُعَذِّبني و أنا أرجوكَ.

Holy One, I implore You, do not subject me to suffering! You are the sole source of my devotion. I have placed my complete faith in You, yearning for the ultimate fulfillment of encountering Your presence, witnessing Your grandeur, experiencing closeness with You, and ultimately finding unity within Your divine essence. I beseech You; do not allow this profound faith to be shattered! Spare me from torment, and do not abandon me. Preserve this source of hope within me and prevent it from transforming into despair.

إلَهي حَقِّق رَجائي.

O God, fulfill my hope!

Make my hope and trust firm, honest, and strong (don't leave them weak and loose)!

What is Imam Sajjad's (peace be upon him) fear?

وَ آمِن خَوفي.

Make me safe from my fear!

O God, deliver me from the fear that grips me! Such a fear stems from the possibility that I may not attain closeness to You in the afterlife. I dread being deprived of Your sole companionship in the grave, a place of solitude, and instead experiencing closeness with any entity other than You.

I beseech You for safety from this all-consuming fear. Grant me refuge so that I may find solace in Your presence. Your arrival and the promise of Your exclusive companionship are the only assurances that will bring me security.

Hoping for Forgiveness

فَإنَّ كَثرَةَ ذُنوبي لا أرجو فيها إلّا عَفوَكَ.

I have committed so many sins that I can only hope for Your forgiveness!

These numerous sins weigh heavily on my shoulders. I have no hope of erasing them except through Your pardon.

Granting of ability by God

سَيِّدي! أنا أسألُكَ ما لا أستَحِقُّ و أنتَ أهلُ التَّقوى و أهلُ المَغفِرَةِ، فاغفِر لي و ألبِسني مِن نَظَرِكَ ثَوبًا يُغَطّي عَلَيَّ التَّبِعاتِ و تَغفِرُها لي و لا أُطالَبُ بِها؛ إنَّكَ ذو مَنٍّ قَديمٍ و صَفحٍ عَظيمٍ و تَجاوُزٍ كَريمٍ!

My master! I ask You for what I do not deserve, and You are the One full of piety and forgiveness. Forgive and clothe me from Your sight with a garment that covers my sins and forgives them for me so that I am not held accountable for them. Indeed, You are the One of everlasting favor, immense forgiveness, and generous overlooking!

O God, I ask You for things that I do not deserve. I do not ask them out of merit.

إنّی أسالُکَ ما لَستُ أهلَه بل اسالُکَ ما کُنتَ أهلَه.

I ask You for things that I am not worthy of or deserve.

My request extends beyond my merits and capabilities. I seek what You are truly able and deserving of bestowing. Indeed, if I based my petition solely on my qualifications, it would be unfounded. After all, from where does such ability even originate?

Let's consider a hypothetical scenario where all potential resides within a single individual. To whom would this potential ultimately belong? Who endowed the human with such ability? Undeniably, it is God who grants us our capabilities.

The temptation of Satan: The path of God is only for those who are capable

The statement that "human beings are not capable" and that "the path of God is only for those who are capable" can be seen as a temptation of Satan to lead people to doubt their ability to fulfill their duties and dampen their enthusiasm. In the face of temptation, individuals should acknowledge their limitations. True ability comes from a higher power. If we rely on our strength and power, we will all be ruined, and if we rely on the strength and power of God, then all strength and power belong to God.

The reason for the acceptance of the prayer of the desperate

بحول الله و قُوَّته أقوم و أقعُد (لا بحولی و قوّتی).[135]

By the power and strength of God, I stand and sit—not by my power and strength. The source of all power and strength belongs to God. Any merit in the world is attributable to God. God bestows it; humanity possesses no merit of its own. Without inherent merit, on what basis, reason, or cause should one petition God? By what law is God obliged to fulfill such prayers? Indeed, man lacks the merit to be deemed worthy of having his prayers answered. Thus, as I petition You, I acknowledge my lack of merit; this is crucial. This is the prayer of the desperate; the prayer of the desperate is answered because the individual recognizes their lack of power or strength.

The desperate individual turns to God with all their heart, seeing no other source of help. They genuinely believe in God, having no one else to rely on. The prayer of the desperate is answered because it is heartfelt, sincere, and genuine, filled with faith and trust in God. God delights in responding to such prayers.

The Imam's Explanation of the Greatest Name (Al-Ism al-A'ẓam)

The Imam was asked, "What is the Greatest Name of God? If a person calls upon God by that name, will his prayer be answered?" The Imam instructed that the questioner be thrown into the river. As the man struggled and began to drown, he cried out, "O God! O God!" The Imam then ordered, "Pull him out!"

Once the man was safely returned to the house, the Imam explained, "This is the Greatest Name of God!" The Greatest Name of God is not a word that can be pronounced; it is a state that must be found within oneself.[136]

The phrase "أامن يجيب المضطر اذا دعاه و يكشف السوء" (Who answers the distressed when he calls upon Him and removes the evil) refers to a state of desperation and disconnection. If a person remains constantly disconnected from all else and turns towards God in all their states, as expressed in the verse, (وتبتل إليه تبتيلا) (and turn to Him with sincere devotion), they recognize no power, strength, ability, talent, or worth in themselves.

When they reach this understanding, how can they rely on themselves? The questions they ask of God are not based on their worthiness, for they acknowledge they have none. Instead, they say, "إنّى لم اسالک ما انا أهله بل اسالک ما أنت أهلُه؛ I do not ask You for what I am worthy of, but I ask You for what You are worthy of!"

The Meaning of "Ahl al-Taqwa and Ahl al-Maghfirah" in the Imam's Phrase

أنتَ أهلُ التّقوى و أهلُ المَغفرةِ..

You are the Most Worthy of Taqwa(piety) and the Most Worthy of maghfirah (Forgiveness)!

You are worthy of giving and bestowing, not me!

سَيِّدى! أنا اسألُکَ ما لا أستَحِقّ.

My Master! I ask You for what I do not deserve.

I ask You for things that I am not worthy of! You are the Most Worthy of piety; You are the Most Worthy of Protection! You can keep Your servants safe in Your protection, and You can protect them from all harm and danger, even from the harm of the devil and the relentless desires of the lower self (Al-Nafs al-ammāra)! You are the Most Worthy of Forgiveness! You see a thousand sins, and You cover them up!

فاغْفِر لى.

So forgive me too!

The characteristics of the clothes and garments that God puts on a person

وَ ألبِسنى مِن نَظَرِکَ ثَوبًا يُغَطّى عَلَىَّ التَّبِعات..

Clothe me from Your sight with a garment that covers my sins.

The word "خلعت" (khila'at) means "garment" or "robe." It often refers to a garment given as a gift or reward. The servant of God was clothed in the garments of forgiveness, symbolizing his absolution from sins. We implore God to grant us a robe of honor woven from forgiveness. May this garment encompass our entire being, crafted from the finest materials, radiating beauty and elegance. Let its fragrance be a source of solace, shielding us from harm and healing any ailments. We seek a garment that bestows knowledge and empowers us, granting contentment and everlasting joy. Ultimately, may this divine robe be an instrument of forgiveness, erasing our transgressions.

These garments are found in the sanctuary of God! If they are not there, then what is there? You will not find a tie in the sanctuary of God. A tie is a cross that belongs to Christians, and they wear it around their necks. Let the tie bless those who follow these religions! But those garments from God transform man's entire being into a shield. within the divine realm exists a form of spiritual protection, a metaphorical "garment" that transforms the human being. This concept resembles ancient medicinal practices, such as creating the complex Triaq Farooq. This legendary remedy, requiring hundreds of ingredients, supposedly expelled all toxins and diseases from the body. Its complexity highlights the potential for a similarly powerful spiritual safeguard.

If such potent remedies exist in the physical world, the divine realm surely possesses even greater protective measures. This protection could be forgiveness, purity, and spiritual garments bestowed upon humanity.
Imam Sajjad, upon him be the peace, embodies the resolute pursuit of such divine protection.

البِسنی مِن نَظَرِکَ.

Have a glance at me.

This dress is yours, and it is only complete with your gaze. It is not made perfect by angels, models, flowers, or anything else.

ألبِسنی مِن نَظَرِکَ ثوباً.

Clothe me with a garment from your gaze.

The gaze of yours makes a garment on our bodies.

یُغَطّی عَلَیَّ التَّبِعاتِ.

You cover me; You cover me from all my sins, evil deeds, and mistakes!

Reminders Regarding the 26th Night of the Blessed Month of Ramadan

Tonight is the 26th night of Ramadan, and it is also possible that it is the Night of Power. (Laylat al-Qadr; the Night of Destiny, Night of Decree, Night of Determination, or the Precious Night). Staying up tonight is recommended, and vigil (Iḥyā') is highly encouraged. Taking a ritual bath (ghusl) for this night is also recommended. If possible, they should stay awake and pray to God, saying: "O God! We have followed the path of Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him). We would not have understood these prayers if you had not introduced us to them. You have put them on our tongues, and we have recited them. What do we ask of You?

ألبِسنی مِن نَظَرِکَ.

Clothe me with Your sight! Cast a glance upon me!

ثوبًا یُغَطّی عَلَیَّ التَّبِعاتِ و تَغفِرُها لی.

Give me a garment that covers my sins and forgives them!

These are the kinds of prayers we ask of You tonight. Do we have the determination? If we are not determined, God will say: These people are just saying things for no reason. If a person sincerely asks God for something, God will surely grant it, God willing! We hope that God will grant it to all of us!

اللهمَّ صلِّ علی محمَّد و آل محمَّد.

Session Nineteen
The Overflowing Grace and Mercy of God on All Beings

أعوذ بالله من الشّيطان الرّجيم
بسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم
وصلّى الله على محمّد و آله الطّاهرين
و لعنة الله على أعدائهم أجمعين.

I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan.
In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
May Allah bless Muhammad and his pure family
And may Allah's curse be upon all their enemies.

God covers not only the original sin but also its consequences and results

و ألبسني من نظرك ثوبًا يغطّي عليّ التّبعات و تغفرها لي و لا أطالب بها إنّك ذو منّ قديم و صفح عظيم و تجاوز كريم.

O Allah, clothe me with a garment of Your mercy that will cover my sins and forgive them so that I will not be asked about them. You are the One of old grace, great forgiveness, and generous pardon."

The word "تبعة" (tabi'ah) means "consequence" or "result" of an action. The consequences of an action can be good or bad, but in this context, it refers to the negative consequences of sin.

The unmerited beneficence of the Lord

و تغفرها.

O Allah, forgive me for all my sins.

و لا أطالب بها.

So that I may not be questioned and asked: What did you do and what did you not do?! When the sin is forgiven and is covered with that robe, I will no longer be asked or held accountable!

إنّك ذو منّ قديم.

Indeed, You are the Possessor of an Old Favor.

"منّ" means "favor" or "gift," and "قديم" means "old" or "ancient." So, the phrase " ذو منّ قديم" literally means "Possessor of an Old Favor.

و صفح عظيم.

Your forgiveness is very great.

و تجاوز كريم.

Oh God, your forgiveness is a testament to your immense grace. It arises not from a requirement for our apologies but rather from your boundless compassion.

The munificence of the Lord, even upon those who deny the lordship

إلهي أنت الّذي تفيض سيبك على من لا يسألك و على الجاحدين بربوبيّتك، فكيف سيّدي بمن سألك و أيقن أنّ الخلق لك و الأمر إليك تباركت و تعاليت يا ربّ العالمين.

The Arabic word "سيب" (pronounced "sayb") with the letter "س" means "gift." "مسيّب" (pronounced "mu-say-yib") means "giver." Someone who gives a lot is called a "مسيّب"!

O God, You are the One who bestows Your gifts and favors upon those who do not ask of You, even those who deny Your Lordship, power, and Divinity! So how is Your state, O my Master, O my Lord, about the one who asks of You and who is certain that there is no Lordship but Yours, and that creation belongs to You and that the command is Yours? You are Exalted and Blessed, O Lord of all the worlds!

يَا مَنْ يُعطِى مَنْ سَألَه يا مَنْ يُعطِى مَنْ لَم يَسألْه.[137]

O You who give to those who ask You, and O You who give to those who do not ask You,

This phrase is from the prayer recited during the month of Rajab.

يَا مَنْ يُعطِى مَنْ سَألَه، يا مَنْ يُعطِى مَنْ لَم يَسألْه و مَنْ لَم يَعرِفْه تَحَنُّناً مِنه و رَحمَةً.[138]

O God, You are the Giver of all good things. You give to those who ask You, and You give to those who do not ask You. You give to those who know You, and to those who do not know You.

«تَحَنُّناً» ای: تَلَطُّفاً مِنکَ و رحمةً مِنکَ.

Your mercy and grace are vast and universal. You extend your abundant grace and mercy to all creatures, whether believers or disbelievers, worshipers or sinners, and to those who ask or do not ask.

Existence precedes the capacity for questioning. Since questioning is an inherent attribute of being, it follows that beings who did not exist could not have petitioned God for existence. Given that existence is a prerequisite for questioning, how can a benevolent God deny the requests of beings He created ex nihilo (from nothing), without any prompting or preconditions? After all, these beings are no more deficient than those who never existed.

The Meaning of "Rabb"

In addition to being the Supreme Being, God, The Exalted, does not abandon His creations. He is both the Creator and the Sustainer. He creates and nurtures all beings on the path to their perfection.

"Rabb" means "the one who nurtures and educates." God is Rabb, meaning He does not just create and abandon. He continues to educate and nurture His creations until they reach perfection. This applies to all beings, not just humans.

All creatures are constantly moving on the path of education and development, whether or not they are aware of it. They are all covered by God's universal grace and are moving on the sacred grace and expanded existence that encompasses all things.

الذي أحسن كل شيء خلقه وبدأ خلق الإنسن من طين.

He who created everything in the best possible way and began the creation of man from clay. (Quran 32:7)

قال ربنا الذى اعطى كل شى ء خلقه ثم هدى.

The God who created every being created it well and then guided and directed it on the path to perfection (after creation, He took hold of its reins and moved it toward its purpose, goal, and destination). (Quran, 20:50)

The Fulfillment of Needs We Are Not Even Aware Of

This concept applies beyond explicit requests. Given the vastness of human needs, it's impossible to articulate every requirement. Many fundamental needs exist below the level of conscious awareness and verbal expression.

In our very essence, we require a Sustainer for our knowledge, power, material and spiritual well-being, down to the level of each individual cell. We need the continual flow of life force! Even as we sit here, we are constantly receiving: our kidneys function, our hearts beat, our stomachs digest, and our lungs purify the air with every breath. Do we ever consciously ask for these things? Do we pray, "O God, keep me from falling over"?

We maintain our balance, engage in conversation, remain seated, nod, take in our surroundings, listen, and even gesture with our hands. All these are distinct actions carried out by the nafs through the will and power of a higher force. Do we ask permission for each one? Do we contemplate the very existence of our being, the movement of blood through our veins and arteries, its direction, and its purpose? God fulfills millions upon millions of our needs every moment without prompting, awareness, or even comprehension. We often lack the very knowledge of what we truly desire, and the depths of our existential needs remain beyond the grasp of our minds.

God's Unfailing Generosity

How could a merciful and compassionate God, who created us and continually grants us the essence of existence, ever deny a request made for our betterment? What reason would He have to withhold anything? Such actions would suggest stinginess, envy, greed, or a desire for vengeance. Yet, giving in no way diminishes His dominions, nor does withholding enhance His majesty.

If God grants blessings even to those who don't ask, what wonders await those who reach out to Him in supplication?

O God, Your generosity extends even to those who don't ask of You or acknowledge You as their Lord! They propose alternative sources of power: the First Intellect, matter itself, the sun, and even angels acting independently. Each creates their own "lord." Yet, You continue to bestow blessings upon even these deniers.

بِمَنْ سَأَلَکَ وَ أَیقَنَ أَنَّ الخَلقَ لَکَ وَ الأَمرَ إِلَیکَ؟

How do You treat us, O God, those who ask of You in full recognition of Your absolute dominion over creation and command? We don't make frivolous requests but ask with certainty that You are the sole source of all that exists, both the physical world (mulk) and the spiritual realm (malakut). We encompass both the material and the immaterial, the limited and the transcendent. We acknowledge You as the sole Lord of everything.

The Exclusivity of All Worlds and Their Ranks Belong to God

تَبارَکتَ.

The meaning of "تَبارَکتَ" is exalted, blessed, and bountiful. It signifies that blessings, goodness, and mercy emanate from You, much like light radiating from the sun and generously illuminating all realms. How far does this light extend? To distances beyond human calculation.

Across all realms – including the world of command (malakut), encompassing both the lower realm of forms and the higher realm beyond forms, with their various degrees – and the world of creation, the natural world where each being possesses a unique essence – exclusive dominion resides with You. From whom, then, should I ask, except You, whose will governs all, whose command compels obedience, and whose knowledge encompasses everything?

The Self-Inflicted Deprivation of God's Grace

Imagine someone who desires darkness. They enter a room, meticulously close the window, draw the curtains, and plunge themselves into an isolated blackness. Alternatively, they might descend into a cellar, burrow underground, or find themselves trapped in a dark well. All these scenarios share one thing: the absence of light is not inherent to their surroundings but rather a consequence of their actions.

The sun, on the other hand, embodies constant benevolence. It has never, throughout its existence, withheld its brilliance. There's no historical or scientific record of the sun capriciously deciding to hold back its light, favoring some locations

over others, or fluctuating in intensity based on whim. It simply illuminates, endlessly radiating across the cosmos. Its reach extends as far as physics allows, and even beyond that limit, other suns take over the illumination. The sun's essence is one of continuous bestowal.

This unwavering generosity stands in stark contrast to limited sources. Imagine a benefactor whose favor is conditional and fleeting – present during the day but absent at night, bestowed in specific locations, or offered only under certain circumstances. God's grace, however, is all-encompassing, complete, and universal, bestowed freely and without measure. This is the true meaning of "tabarak" – blessedness beyond compare.

The Meaning of "Ta'alayta"(تعالیت)

و تعالَیتَ.

You are truly high, and Your horizon is lofty; you are very high; you are higher than anything we can say; you are higher than anything we can imagine; you do not condescend to come down and judge our actions and deeds and take away Your grace from us and cut it off! That is not the case.

Our limitations shape our perception of reality

If we feel disconnected from your benevolence, it's due to our actions. We isolate ourselves, hindering the flow of your positive influence, much like someone descending to a basement and locking themselves in a well, shutting out the light.

این جهان پر آفتاب و نور ماه
او بهشته سر فرو برده به چاه
که اگر حقست پس کو روشنی
سر ز چه بردار و بنگر ای دنی
جمله عالم شرق و غرب آن نور یافت
تا تو در چاهی نخواهد بر تو تافت.[139]

In sunlit world, by moonbeams kissed,
A soul descends, in darkness missed.
Where truth resides, no light is found,
Head from the well, let wisdom sound!
The East, the West, in radiance gleam,
But in that well, your sight's a dream.
So raise your gaze, and cast aside
The depths that shroud, where shadows hide.

All human sins stem from ignorance and negligence, creating a veil between themselves and their Lord. In the beginning of this supplication, didn't the Imam say, "You are not veiled from Your creation; what veils them from You are the deeds they perform!"

و أنَّكَ لا تَحتَجِبُ عَن خَلقِكَ إلاّ أن تَحجُبَهُم الأعمالُ دُونَكَ.[140]

So, our actions are like a veil we put over our own eyes. If someone puts a veil over their face and can't see the sun, they shouldn't complain, "O sun, you deprived me!"

All the deficiency is on our side because sin is only a veil, and the veil belongs to the nafs, not to the Essence of Truth.

و الشَّرُّ لیسَ إلیكَ.[141]

Evil does not belong to You!

و الشَّرُّ أعدام فكم قد ضَلَّ مَن
يَقولُ باليزدان ثمَّ الأهرمن.[142]

And evil is nonexistent, so how many have gone astray
Who speaks of Yazdan (the good deity) and then Ahriman (the evil deity)

The Constant Divine Renewal in All Creation

During Ramadan, I spent much time observing nature in the courtyard. Among the wonders I encountered was a magnificent tulip. Its growth is truly remarkable, reaching impressive heights in a short period.

This phenomenal display raises a profound question: how does such an intricate existence arise and persist? The answer lies in the continuous outpouring of divine creative force. Every living being, from the majestic tulip to the seemingly insignificant mosquito, is constantly sustained by this force. It is the source of their life, movement, and purpose.

The interruption of this flow, even for a moment, results in the cessation of life. This constant renewal highlights the interconnectedness of all creation with the divine source.

و تری الجبال تحسبها جامده و هی تمر مر السحاب.

You see the mountains, you think they are stationary, while they are passing like clouds. (Quran, 27:88)

The Limitations of Human Praise for the Divine

Human attempts to praise the divine with terms like "great" raise a critical question. Do such pronouncements truly describe the divine, or are they merely reflections of human limitations?

The analogy of a darkened room offers a helpful illustration. Imagine someone exiting a dark room and encountering the sun for the first time. They might exclaim, "What a magnificent sun!" However, their perception is inherently limited. They have only just emerged from darkness, and their view of the sun is restricted by the vast distance (eight minutes and thirteen seconds light-years). Additionally, they are not experiencing the sun directly but through a potentially dirty windowpane. A direct gaze would likely be blinding.

Despite these limitations, the individual claims to have "seen" the sun. In reality, their understanding is incomplete.

مادح خورشید مداح خود است
که دو چشمم روشن و نامُرمدست.[143]

The sun's admirer sings its praise,
But truly honors their own gaze.
For eyes unclouded, vision keen,
Reflect the light, a vibrant scene.

While someone might appear to praise the sun by admiring its beauty, this admiration could be interpreted as an indirect recognition of one's healthy vision. The ability to see the sun becomes a source of wonder, leading to an expression of self-gratitude for having open and functioning eyes. Therefore, praising the sun might be seen as a celebration of one's perceptive faculties rather than appreciating the sun itself.

With these words, we praise and glorify God:

لَکَ الخَلقُ، لَکَ الأمرُ، لَکَ الحُکمُ، انتَ السَّمیعُ، انتَ العَلیمُ، ذو مَنٍّ قَدیمٍ و تَجاوُزٍ کَریم، تَبارَکتَ و تَعالَیتَ.

To You belongs all creation. To You belongs all command. To You belongs all judgment. You are the All-Hearing. You are the All-Knowing. You are the Possessor of ancient grace and generous forgiveness. Blessed and exalted are You.

Only God Can Truly Describe Himself

After presenting these supplications to God, Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) says:

إلهی... أنتَ کما تَقولُ و فَوقَ ما نَقولُ.[144]

O God, You are as You say and even greater than we say.

We do not truly know You, so we cannot fully describe You. Only You know Yourself completely.

أنتَ کما أثنَیتَ علی نَفسِک.[145]

You can praise yourself and recite your praise; we cannot.

The Intrinsic Need and Poverty of Man

سَیّدی عَبدُکَ بِبابِکَ أقامَتهُ الخَصاصَةُ بَینَ یَدَیکَ یَقرَعُ بابَ إحسانِکَ بِدُعائِهِ فَلا تُعرِضْ بِوَجهِکَ الکَریمِ عَنّی و اقبَلْ مِنّی ما أقُولُ فَقَد دَعَوتُکَ بِهذا الدُّعاءِ و أنا أرجُو أن لا تَرُدَّنی مَعرِفَةً مِنّی بِرأفَتِکَ و رَحمَتِکَ.[146]

O my Lord! You are the Master, and I am the servant!

إلی أینَ یَفِرُّ العَبدُ إلاّ إلی مَولاه.[147]

Where can a servant flee except to their master?

O God, I am Your servant, and You are my Master. I, Your servant, have come to Your door and taken refuge at Your threshold. The poverty I sense in my being has made me a resident of Your door. This need has pinned me between Your two hands of beauty and majesty. There is nowhere else I can go except to this gate of mercy.

As Your creation, I am inherently limited and in need. Denying this truth would be a deception. All claims of absolute self-sufficiency are ultimately false.

A Profound Encounter in Najaf

A friend in Najaf recounted a story about the late Qazi (may he rest in peace). During Ramadan, the Qazi reportedly held gatherings at this very time - three or four o'clock in the morning. His students would attend for an hour or so, listening to his discourses.

Someone decided to attend one such gathering out of curiosity. He did not enter the meeting room but sat outside. After about half an hour of Qazi's speech, he left, deeply affected by what he had heard. He described feeling as though either he had lost his mind or everyone else in the world had.

This experience highlights a profound truth: the path to spiritual understanding fundamentally differs from how most people live their lives. The majority tend to follow paths built on illusion and pride, mistaking them for the path of truth. Humans often view themselves as possessing wealth, power, knowledge, and authority. However, these are all ultimately fleeting and insignificant. Humanity's true nature is one of inherent limitation and potential, not inherent glory. The true path requires a recognition of this fundamental lack and a willingness to seek a deeper reality.

Kingship does not befit me, for I lack majesty

الکِبریاءُ إزاری و العَظَمَةُ رِدائی.[148]

Majesty is my garment, and Greatness is my cloak.

Just as a servant wearing their master's clothes would feel an obvious mismatch, so too does a being of lesser stature who cannot truly embody qualities like greatness or majesty. This discomfort wouldn't be from the outside world but from an internal recognition of the inauthenticity.

One conjures the image of a young child attempting to wear the clothes of a large adult. A two—or four-year-old struggling with the massive garments of a wrestler highlights the absurdity of the attempt. Similarly, a fox draped in a lion's skin remains a fox. No matter how long it wears the pelt, it cannot transform its essence.

Inherent Poverty in All Creation

The concept of inherent poverty explores the idea that all created things depend on a source beyond themselves. This source, often called the "wājib" (the necessary), continuously sustains their existence.

We can illustrate this with a simple example. The lamp illuminating this mosque receives its light from a power plant. This light is constantly supplied, and the lamp cannot claim to be the source of its illumination. It merely receives and transmits light. If the lamp were to declare itself the "origin of light," it would be demonstrably false. The source lies in the power plant's generator, which continuously provides energy. Like all created things, the lamp is a recipient, not a source.

The Fulfillment of the Needs of All Creatures by the Lord

All beings, whether animals, humans, ignorant, or learned, are ultimately consumers, not creators.

Due to my inherent need, I am drawn to You, O God. My very essence is that of a receiver, and I require sustenance. Without it, I am devoid of light and purpose.

You created me as a lamp, but I cannot illuminate without your power. I am merely a vessel. Likewise, as an electric kettle, I require your current to boil water. Otherwise, I am nothing more than discarded metal. As a tree, a human, an animal, or any other creation, I depend on your continual emanation to exist. Without it, I am but nothingness.

أقامَتهُ الخَصاصةُ.

God brought me here and stopped me between the two hands of His mercy and grace, majesty and beauty!

يقرَعُ بابَ إحسانِک بدُعائه.

He constantly knocks on the door of Your goodness because of his desire and supplication!

فلا تُعرِض بِوجهِکَ الکَريم عنّی.

So do not turn away Your noble face from me.

The Noble and Generous Face of the Lord in Response to the Requests of His Servants

A noble face is also generous, kind, cheerful, and loving. When a child asks his father for something, the father doesn't scold or slap him. Instead, he might pat the child's head, show affection, and grant the request. This makes the child always want to return to their parents and ask for things.

On the other hand, a child with a frowning and scowling father wouldn't dare ask for anything. The moment the child opens their mouth, they fear getting slapped. They wouldn't even dare ask for a simple treat like candy or chocolate.

But Your face, O God, is generous! Please don't turn away Your noble face from me.

How a servant should ask and request from the Lord

و اقبَل منّی ما اقُول.

Accept from me what I say.

حتماً فإن لم ترحمْ فارحَمْ.

If You do not have mercy, then have mercy!

You may choose to have mercy or not, You may choose to do it or not, but You are inevitably bound to have mercy!

In short, our question is like that of a beggar who says: You may choose to give or not; it is up to You, but in any case, You must give.

فقد دعوتُ بهذا الدّعاءِ و أنا أرجو أن لا تردّني معرفةً منّي برأفتكَ و رحمتِكَ.

So I have called upon You with this prayer, and I hope that You will not reject me, knowing Your mercy and compassion.

I have praised You in this prayer and all my prayers, and I have remembered You. I know You are the Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate, so I pray to You and ask for Your help. I am poor and needy, and I have come to Your door. I will not leave until You answer my prayer.

سيّدي عبدُك ببابك أقامته الخصاصةُ بين يديك.

My master, your servant, is at your door. The need has brought him to stand before you. He will not leave this door!

The questioner does not tire God, and answering the questioner does not diminish His kingdom.

إلهي أنتَ الّذي لا يُحفيكَ سائلٌ و لا ينقصُك نائلٌ.

O Allah, You are not burdened by a supplicant, nor does a giver diminish You.

Some individuals who make requests may come across as demanding rather than simply in need. This can be likened to a historical account of a person approaching the Prophet for assistance. While making a request is acceptable, there are ways to do so respectfully. The story recounts how this individual pulled on the Prophet's cloak with such force that it caused injury.[149] This behavior goes beyond a simple request and could be interpreted as a form of entitlement.

Many individuals would frequently approach the Prophet in public and private settings with excessive demands. These demands reportedly involved large quantities of valuable goods. The implication is that such a person is not truly impoverished but seeks to exploit the Prophet's generosity.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

أعيني [أعنا] بطول السّجود.

Help me with long prostration.

On one occasion, a visitor presented the Prophet with a gift. The Prophet and his companions accepted the offering and moved on. However, the visitor remained standing there, seemingly hesitant. After a moment, the Prophet, recognizing the man's unspoken request, chuckled heartily, revealing his molars.

ضحكَ رسولُ الله حتّى بدتْ نواجذُه.[150]

The source of the man's hesitation became clear: he expected compensation for his gift, even though it was likely intended as a gesture of respect or devotion. The Prophet's laughter highlighted the incongruity of expecting payment alongside a gift.

Once, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was returning home when a man approached him and insisted on carrying the Prophet's belongings. Despite the man's repeated offers, the Prophet politely declined. Upon reaching his doorstep, the man

stopped the Prophet and presented a request. "O Messenger of Allah," he said, "since I assisted you by carrying your load, I have a request - would you guarantee me a place in Paradise?" The Prophet paused for reflection before responding, "I will consider your request, but only on one condition: you must assist me in performing extended prostrations."[15] The Prophet offered him a path toward his aspiration, which required dedicated devotion.

Allah is an inexhaustible treasure trove

Oh Allah! You are the one to whom the supplicant makes requests, complains, shouts, and cries out, "You must give me such and such! You cannot refuse!" He does not cease, and you do not tire or attribute matters to these words! The giving and bestowing that you do does not diminish your kingdom. Allah is an inexhaustible treasure trove; whatever you take from infinity does not diminish.

انت كما تقول و فوق ما تقول.

You are as You say and even beyond what we say.

When we address you with attributes like "No supplicant can ever diminish you, and no gift can ever increase your abundance",

لا يحفيك سائل و لا ينقصك نائل.

we are praising you based on our limited understanding and capacity. However, you are who you are, regardless of our perceptions. You are the sun, and you alone know the true nature of things. We call out to you from afar, behind the veil of our limited understanding. We are vastly different from you! Therefore, grant us, finite beings that we are, a share of your boundless power, grandeur, capacity, and the infinite knowledge, life, and might that you bestow upon all existence.

Interpretation of 'beautiful patience' (Sabr-i Jamil)

اللهم إني أسئلك صبراً جميلاً و فرجاً قريباً و قولاً صادقاً و أجراً عظيماً.

O God, I humbly beseech You for several blessings. First and foremost, I implore You to grant me beautiful patience. By this, I mean the strength to endure with grace and inner peace, free from resentment and complaint.

Someone can appear patient on the surface, yet their patience lacks true beauty. Their outward demeanor may be calm, but their heart may harbor a fire of discontent and grievance. Such patience is not what I seek, O Lord.

Therefore, I earnestly request beautiful patience. May You grant me the serenity to accept Your decrees and predestinations with unwavering faith, knowing that all things unfold according to Your perfect wisdom. May You bless me with inner peace and tranquility so I may face life's challenges without complaint or grumbling.

و فرجاً قريباً.

O Gracious God, I seek Your divine intervention to open relief doors for me. I implore You, O Merciful Lord, to not close the doors of opportunity before me. O Most Compassionate One, I beseech You to hasten the arrival of relief and ease in my life. Let not my efforts go in vain, but rather grant me swift progress and a favorable outcome.

و قولاً صادقاً.

O Lord of Truth, I implore You to grant me the blessing of truthful speech. May my words align with my thoughts and intentions and always reflect the essence of truth. Guide me, O Merciful One, to speak with integrity and honesty, never straying

from the path of righteousness. Let my utterances be devoid of falsehood and deception, always adhering to the principles of justice and fairness. Bestow upon me, O All-Knowing One, the wisdom to discern truth and falsehood.

و اجراً عظيماً.

O Generous Provider, I humbly request You to grant me a bountiful reward for my efforts and endeavors. O Lord of Immensity, do not judge us by the insignificance of our actions but rather by the vastness of Your mercy and compassion.

أنتَ كَما تَقولُ و فَوقَ ما نَقول.

O Lord of Abundance, do not dwell upon our limitations and shortcomings but upon Your boundless generosity and grace.

We stand humbly before You, seeking blessings and favors that transcend our abilities. Our desires may seem ambitious, but we believe in Your infinite power to fulfill even the most heartfelt wishes.

أسألُکَ يارَبِّ مِنَ الخَيرِ كُلِّهِ ما عَلِمتُ مِنهُ و ما لَم أعلَمْ.

O Lord, I ask You for all that is good, both what I know and do not know.

Do not assume that we will cease praising You for all Your exalted attributes after doing so extensively. I implore You, O my Lord, to shower me with all forms of goodness, both those I am aware of and those I am not.

O God, I ask You for the best thing that Your righteous servants have ever asked for, even though I am not righteous.

أسألُکَ اللهُمَّ مِن خَيرِ ما سَألَکَ مِنهُ عِبادُکَ الصّالِحُونَ، يا خَيرَ مَن سُئِلَ و أجوَدَ مَن أعطىٰ أعطِنِی سُؤلِی فِی نَفسِی و أهلِی و والِدَیَّ و وَلَدِی و أهلِ حُزانَتِی و إخوانِی فِیکَ [و] أرغِد عَيشِی و أظهِرْ مُرُوَّتِی و أصلِحْ جَمِيعَ أحوالِی.

Exalted God, I humbly beseech You to grant me the blessings that Your most righteous servants have implored. You are the Most Generous Benefactor and the Most Compassionate Answerer of prayers.

I request Your divine favor for myself, my family, my parents, my children, my extended household, and my fellow believers. Grant me ease and comfort in this life. May You fulfill my righteous desires and bring harmony and peace to all aspects of my being.

O Gracious God, I humbly beseech You to bestow upon me the very best that Your righteous servants have ever sought from You.

I acknowledge my shortcomings and imperfections, and I am not worthy to be counted among the righteous. Yet, I hold them in deep reverence and admiration, hoping their righteousness might reflect upon me and inspire Your grace.

Though I am not among the righteous, I earnestly implore You to grant me the blessings they have sought that resonated with Your divine approval. May Your benevolence extend to me without diminishing the blessings bestowed upon those who have truly earned them.

As the sacred month of Ramadan nears its culmination on the 28th night, a sense of closure hangs in the air. However, our gaze should not be directed at ourselves but rather toward Your infinite majesty, O Allah. For within our hearts resides a yearning for the blessings and righteous aspirations that Your devoted servants have sought from You.

We fervently strive towards these ideals, yet we face formidable obstacles – poverty, want, crushing burdens, the allure of darkness, the weight of our

transgressions and desires, and the chains of worldly attachments that bind our souls and impede their ascent to Your divine presence.

Your righteous predecessors embarked on their journeys and reached You, seeking Your divine favors. We humbly echo their pleas: bestow upon us the same blessings You showered upon them. In Your boundless generosity, accept our supplications and understand that our offerings are limited. We are, after all, human, susceptible to imperfections. If it is Your will to grant us prosperity, we receive it with open arms.

However, if Your wisdom dictates otherwise, we submit to Your divine decree with complete acceptance. Nevertheless, we raise our voices in fervent supplication.

We have heard Your promise, O Allah, that You fulfill the requests of those who seek You. We humbly implore You to also grant us this favor easily. We acknowledge that some devotional practices, such as praying a thousand rak'ahs every night or engaging in extensive physical jihad, are beyond our current capabilities. While admirable, these acts may not necessarily align with our strengths and dispositions.

However, the stories of the Prophet's companions, particularly Imam Ali's unwavering piety and generosity, inspire us deeply. Hearing about their devotion fills our hearts with joy and motivates us to strive for a closer connection with You.

Therefore, O Most Merciful, we plead for Your understanding. We offer our sincere love and devotion within the capacity You have granted us. We pray for Your acceptance and guidance on a path that aligns with our abilities and leads us closer to You.

اللهمّ صلّ على محمّد و آل محمّد.

O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.

Session Twenty
Sincerity and Hypocrisy and the Criteria for Distinguishing Them

أعوذ بالله من الشّيطان الرّجيم
بسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم
و صلّى الله علىٰ محمّدٍ و آله الطّاهرين
و لعنةُ الله علىٰ أعدائهم أجمعين

أسألك اللهمّ من خيرِ ما سألك منه عبادُك الصّالحون، يا خيرَ مَن سُئل و أجودَ مَن أعطى أعطِني سُؤلي في نفسي و أهلي و والدَيّ و وُلدي و أهل حُزانتي و إخواني فيك.

O Lord, I ask You for the best things that Your righteous servants have asked You for...!

The root of disparity in human desires lies in the varying states of their inner selves

This is evident in the diverse prayers, supplications, and blessings individuals offer. The more devout and righteous a person becomes, the more nuanced and refined their expressions. Conversely, those with a hardened soul and inflated egos tend to exhibit a pronounced coarseness in their supplications. This "coarseness" signifies the ego's dominance (nafs) over their spiritual aspirations.

Individuals whose desires are heavily influenced by the world tend to formulate prayers that reflect their internal state and worldly aspirations. As a result, their supplications focus on strengthening their ego and acquiring worldly benefits that enhance their status and power. This internal drive for self-aggrandizement manifests in many ways, sometimes through material pursuits, religious piety (used as a tool for worldly gain), asceticism as a display of self-importance, political power, intellectual achievements, or wealth accumulation. The diverse forms this desire takes make it challenging to discern which aspirations are truly aligned with a divine purpose.

The Criterion for Distinguishing Purity in Action

There is only one sign by which a person can fairly measure whether their action is for God. And that is:

اللهمّ ارزُقني التّجافي عن دارِ الغُرور و الإنابةَ إلىٰ دارِ الخُلود.[152]

O Allah, grant me the ability to turn away from the abode of delusion and towards the abode of eternity.

Every action can be evaluated based on its effect on worldly and spiritual inclinations. Actions that decrease attachment to the world and increase love for the hereafter will likely please God. Conversely, actions that heighten worldly attachment and diminish love for the hereafter likely displease Him.

An individual of faith strives to cultivate a deeper connection with God and secure His divine blessing. Actions that facilitate this pursuit are deemed morally good, while those that impede it are considered morally wrong.

The True Nature of the World

Anything that strengthens a person's will and autonomy in opposition to the divine will or that inflates their ego is part of the world, regardless of its outward form.

In its broadest sense, the world encompasses everything other than God (ma siwa Allah). Therefore, it includes all that exists. Those who yearn for an encounter with God (like Allah) gradually surrender their will and power to the divine will. This process culminates in God becoming the manager of their affairs. This is the essence of wilayah.

Wilayah signifies the state where a servant obeys God so much that they surrender all their choices. God then becomes the *mudabbir* (المدبر) or The Arranger of Affairs.

The true meaning of tawhid - the oneness of God - is revealed in a person only when they surrender their will and power. Without this surrender, attaining the honor of encountering God is impossible, even after billions of years. Performing countless

acts of worship or seemingly impressive deeds cannot bring this understanding if true surrender is absent. Such actions lack the true essence, and their mere quantity will not bring you closer to the Divine. Therefore, the prayers we offer are all different forms of this surrender.

My supplication is the appeal of Your righteous servants

What should one genuinely pray for? There is a concern that my prayers may be centered solely on my nafs rather than on its spiritual growth. Such prayers might inadvertently foster arrogance instead of shielding against selfishness. Perhaps the most fitting prayer is: "Oh God, grant us the same blessings that You bestowed upon Your righteous servants!"

It's important to acknowledge that the Exalted God has and always will have, righteous servants whose prayers are not motivated by self-aggrandizement or arrogance. Their supplications arise from a place of genuine purity. These prayers express a yearning for the afterlife, a detachment from worldly concerns, a desire for closeness to God, and the attainment of spiritual guardianship (wilayah). Their purpose is to destroy the world of social constructs and values and the world of imagination, a quest for truth, and a rejection of falsehood.

Zayd ibn Ali narrates: I saw my father, Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon them), on the twenty-seventh night of the blessed month of Ramadan, praying from the beginning of the night until the end, saying:

اَللهُمَّ ارزُقْنی التَّجافی عن دارِ الغُرور و الإنابةَ إلیٰ دارِ الخُلود.[153]

O Allah, grant us the ability to turn away from the abode of illusion and towards the abode of eternity.

During the two Eids (Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha), we recite:

اَللهُمَّ إنّی أسئلُک خیرَ ما سألک منه عبادُک الصّالحون و أعوذ بک ممّا استعاذَ منه عبادُک المخلِصون.[154]

O Allah, I ask You for the best that Your righteous servants have asked You for, and I seek refuge in You from what Your sincere servants have sought refuge from.

In this context, the word Mukhlaṣūn (مخلصون) refers to those who strive for sincerity and purity in their worship.

و أعوذُ بک ممّا استعاذَ منه عبادُک المخلَصون.[155]

The phrase "that which the sincere ones seek refuge from" is inaccurate. This is because the mukhlaṣin have already reached a level of spiritual perfection where they are no longer in need of seeking refuge from anything. They have already overcome the devil's temptations and attained inner peace and security. The devil has lost all hope for the sincere and cannot reach them.[156]

The Subtler the Sincerity, the Subtler the Temptation

The more refined one's sincerity, the more refined the temptations of the devil become. This applies to those who have not yet attained complete sincerity and purity. They are still purifying themselves and striving for sincerity.

The devil targets these individuals and tempts them away from their path. The more refined their sincerity, the more subtle and sophisticated the devil's temptations will be.

Sometimes, Satan can be so subtle in his deception that we may not even realize that we are being led astray. He can present himself very appealing, making distinguishing between good and evil difficult.

The path may become increasingly stringent and challenging as one advances on the spiritual journey. This is due to the evolving nature of Satan's temptation. With progress, the deceptions may become more nuanced and insidious, often disguised as seemingly harmless or beneficial experiences.

The saints of God, striving to attain the highest levels of closeness to God, are particularly aware of the dangers of the nafs (the lower self). They know that the nafs can be very deceptive, even presenting itself as something good or virtuous.

It is important to be aware of the danger of self-deception. We may think we are doing something good when, in reality, we are being led astray by the nafs.[157]

The hadith, "حسناتُ الأبرار سيّئاتُ المقرّبين" (hasanat al-abrar siyyi'at al-muqarrabin), means that "the good deeds of the righteous are considered sins by the close ones to God."[158]

Some may simply recite the following dua:

اللّهُمّ إنّی أسئلک خیرَ ما سألک منه عبادُک الصّالحون.

O Allah, I ask You for the best Your righteous servants have asked You for.

However, such a request requires genuine sincerity. The aspirations of the righteous are not limited to material comforts or fleeting pleasures.

True supplication often entails: "O Allah, purify us!"

This purification, however, necessitates trials and tribulations. Just as iron requires the intense heat of the furnace to be cleansed of impurities, and gold needs the goldsmith's crucible for refinement, the human nafs, too, undergoes challenges to achieve spiritual purity. Therefore, when offering supplication, one should approach it with true surrender:

یا خیرَ من سُئل.

You are the best of those asked and from whom requests are made; you are our choice and will.

و أجود من أعطى.

Of all those who show kindness, assist, and bestow gifts, You, O God, are the most generous in Your giving.

أعطنی سؤلی فی نفسی.

O God, consider my requests, especially those concerning my nafs!

Give me what I truly desire for my nafs! What I desire for my nafs is not that which leads to its inflation or expansion. Rather, it is that which leads to its refinement and delicacy so that it may comprehend Your grandeur and majesty.

أعطنی سؤلی فی نفسی و أهلی.

For myself, my family, my dependents, and those who are related to me.

و والدَیّ.

Give my parents (what they need).

و وُلدی.

And my children; give them (what they need).

اهلَ حُزانتی.

And those close to me, those who depend on me, and those I am concerned about.

و إخوانی فیک.

And my brothers in Your path, give them (what they need).

While a person may have numerous biological brothers, a deeper connection exists with those who share your faith. Therefore, the prayers I offer to you, O God, extend equally to those brothers who share my faith.

A pleasant life is a life free from fear and sorrow

و أرغِد عيشي.

Make my life pleasant; make it fresh and pure.

The word "رغد -raghad" means fresh, pure, and good. A pleasant life is called "'Aysh-i raghad". "'Aysh" signifies sustenance or existence. While a person may possess life, it can be rendered undesirable by the presence of sorrow. Conversely, a life devoid of anxieties and apprehensions is considered fulfilling. Universally, all individuals encounter fear and sorrow. Liberation from these afflictions is unattainable until one establishes a profound connection with God or becomes an *'Awliyā'Allāh* (saint or friend of God).

ألا إن أولياء الله لا خوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون .

Behold! The *'Awliyā'Allāh* (allies of Allah) - no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve. (Quran 10:62)

Having surrendered their will and authority to God, they are under His divine stewardship. They have shifted from *Juz'īyah*(details) or a narrow, detail-oriented perspective to a comprehensive, holistic understanding (*kullīyyah*). They perceive the universe as an integrated whole, expanding their capacity for resilience and responsibility in challenging circumstances (*sa'ah*). Whether they gain or lose, it is solely God's dispensation. Free from fear and sorrow, they recognize all occurrences as manifestations of God's will, possessing nothing independently. This freedom from fear and sorrow is a liberation that brings peace and tranquility.

Individuals often immerse themselves in worldly pursuits as a temporary refuge from fear and sorrow. Having not surrendered their hearts and wills to God, such individuals perceive themselves as perpetually vulnerable to countless potential misfortunes. Each such misfortune can severely disrupt their lives and alter their emotional landscape. They carry the weight of past losses, a constant lament for what is irretrievable, and are consumed by anxiety regarding future adversities

Their sorrow remains deeply embedded even if they divert their minds from these worries. This fear and sadness are interwoven into their very being. Therefore, the pleasures they seek are merely distractions, fleeting escapes from their underlying anxieties. As soon as the pleasure fades, the fear and sadness return, as firmly entrenched as ever. This is the nature of human experience.

Addressing Criticisms of Khayyam's Perspective and Explaining the Path of Spiritual Guidance

Khayyam penned a verse that reads:

می خوردن من نه از برای طربست
نز بهر نشاط و ترک دین و ادبست
خواهم که دمی ز خویشتن باز رهم
می خوردن و مست بودنم زین سبب است.[159]

My wine-drinking is not for revelry's sake,
Nor for pleasure, nor to faith's tenets break.
I seek a respite from my self's embrace,
And wine and intoxication, my means to escape.

It is commonly assumed that Khayyam indulged in physical wine rather than seeking a spiritual intoxication. Consequently, his poems are often perceived as lacking in connection to monotheism and relegated to a lower literary standing. This perception has made Khayyam's poetry particularly appealing to non-believers.

I once read in a book that every English girl and boy carries a translation of Khayyam's poems in their pocket. This is a reflection of his verses' resonance with their spirit.

In the cited verse, Khayyam elucidates that his wine drinking is not a pursuit of revelry or rebellion against faith. Instead, it is a desperate attempt to escape the overwhelming burdens of his thoughts and emotions. This struggle, yearning for temporary oblivion, starkly contrasts those who willingly surrender their will to a higher power.

Those who embark on the path of spiritual guidance and surrender their will to God are fundamentally transforming their very being. They open their eyes to the vastness of the universe, comprehending its mysteries, the connection between the created and the Creator, and the manifestation of Divine light in all existence. This is a realm far beyond the limited understanding of ordinary minds.

The profound joy and fulfillment experienced by those on the path of surrender stand in stark contrast to the fleeting pleasures sought by Khayyam through intoxication. Despite his lack of worldly burdens, Khayyam was plagued by the inherent sorrow of existence and the ego's incessant demands. He sought temporary oblivion through wine, a futile attempt to escape the pain of his self-centeredness.

The true path to liberation lies not in escapism but in pursuing knowledge and self-realization. Until an individual attains true understanding, even a lifetime of intoxication cannot provide lasting relief. At the moment of death, the ego, unaffected by the effects of wine, will accompany the individual into the afterlife, where intoxication is not readily available. Facing the judgment of eternity, the individual will be forced to open their eyes, a task made infinitely more difficult if they have neglected to do so in this life.

ومن أعرض عن ذكري فإن له معيشة ضنكا ونحشره يوم القيامة أعمى

Whoever turns away from My remembrance, indeed he will have a difficult life, and We will raise him blind on the Day of Resurrection.

و ارغد عيشي.

O Lord, grant me a life of ease and make my existence pleasant.

This supplication, attributed to Imam Sajjad, reflects a profound aspiration for a life devoid of fear and sorrow. However, a deeper examination reveals a more complex spiritual yearning.

While the imagery of a physical paradise, often associated with this supplication, is alluring, it is essential to recognize the limitations of material desires. Humans, with their inherent limitations, often misuse such blessings, reducing them to mere animalistic pursuits.

The true essence of this supplication lies in a quest for a spiritual paradise, a realm where fear and sorrow are transcended by inner peace and enlightenment. This "garden of contentment" is not a physical space but a transformative state characterized by a genuine connection to the divine.

The Essence of True Delight in Rumi's Poetry

هر کجا یوسف رخی باشد چو ماه،
هست جنت گرچه باشد قعر چاه.

Wherever there's a moon-like face of Yusuf,

A paradise it becomes, even in a well's abyss.[160]

Rumi's poetry beautifully captures the essence of true delight. The poet asserts that for those who seek the spiritual beauty of Yusuf, even the depths of a well can be transformed into a paradise.

و أظهر مُرُوَّتی.

Reveal my true character, my inner chivalry.
"مروّت" (muruwah) encompasses a multifaceted concept of noble virtues, often associated with masculinity. It embodies traits like selflessness, generosity, and unwavering faith. A divine force is needed to manifest these qualities within the individual, urging them to shed any veil of concealment and embrace their true essence.

و أصلح جميعَ أحوالی.

Restructure my life's tapestry, weaving harmony into every thread.

This plea emphasizes the desire for divine intervention to mend and revitalize one's life. It conveys the notion of a comprehensive transformation encompassing all aspects of existence.

Aspiring for death before attaining the station of spiritual guardianship is a misguided endeavor.

و اجعلْنی ممّن أطلتَ عُمرَه و حسّنتَ عملَه و أتممتَ علیه نعمتَک و رَضیتَ عنه و أحییتَه حیاةً طیّبةً فی أدوم السُرور و أسبغ الکرامة و أتمّ العیش إنّک تفعلُ ما تشاءُ و لا یفعلُ ما یشاءُ غیرُک.
O God, please grant me a long life on this earth. I yearn for an extended time.

Once a person's lifespan concludes, their actions are permanently recorded, their potential exhausted, and they become like a sealed document, incapable of further development. Thus, longevity is advantageous, permitting continued pursuit of endeavors. Premature death truncates one's actions.

Upon attaining the exalted station of *wilayat*, or Divine Presence, the duration of life becomes inconsequential. Such individuals surrender their lives to God's will, declaring, "O God, my life is in Your hands, be it long or short." However, until reaching this spiritual pinnacle and possessing all requisite perfections, a desire for death is inappropriate.

Those genuinely yearning for death should heed the adage, "Die before you die."

موتوا قبلَ أن تموتوا.[161]

They can spiritually transcend worldly existence before physical demise.

Nevertheless, when the appointed time of death arrives, it claims them in an unfinished state.

Indeed, a person should strive in this world! Everyone who has put in the effort has reaped the rewards! The spiritual and soulful advancements one seeks must be attained in this life. When a person passes away, they carry the acquisitions they have gained in this world.

لها ما كسبت و عليها ما اكتسبت .

'For them is what they have earned, and upon them is what they have acquired.' This is the essence of the matter!

Upon recognizing a deficit in spiritual growth, individuals may yearn for the cessation of earthly existence. However, the termination of life does not necessarily equate to spiritual liberation. The self, replete with worldly desires and passions, persists beyond physical death. Freed from corporeal limitations and devoid of temporal constraints, the self's influence intensifies. Propelled by unbridled desires, its actions may align

more closely with the characteristics of hellfire than paradise. Given the inherent impurity of the self, the afflictions experienced in the afterlife become evident. These trials are not manifestations of divine retribution but the consequences of the self's inclinations. Quran affirms, "Verily, Allah wrongs not mankind, but mankind wrongs itself.

إن الله لا يظلم الناس شيئا ولكن الناس أنفسهم يظلمون.[162]

O God, grant me a long life! With an extended life, one progresses steadily, step by step, towards spiritual fulfillment.

و حَسَّنتَ عملَه.

Grant that my actions be righteous. You ultimately bestow righteousness, not I alone. Though I strive for it, Your divine will is the true source of my deeds' righteousness.

و أتممتَ عليه نعمتَك.

Bestow upon me Your complete and abundant blessings. Many are those upon whom You have lavished Your fullness of grace. Grant that I may be numbered among those who have received Your perfect benediction (the supreme blessing being Wilayat).

و رضيتَ عنه.

Make me one with whom You are pleased!

رضي الله عنهم ورضوا عنه.[163]

Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Allah.

All grievances have been resolved by both parties. There is no objection from the divine, as it is declared, "My servant obeys Me." Likewise, the servant harbors no complaints, for their understanding has deepened to such an extent that all events and outcomes are perceived as the divine decree and wisdom, the ultimate embodiment of goodness. They are entirely content; may I attain such a state.

و أحييتَه حيوةً طيبةً.

Grant me a pure and wholesome life.

من عمل صالحا من ذكر أو أنثى وهو مؤمن فلنحيينه حياة طيبة ولنجزينهم أجرهم بأحسن ما كانوا يعملون.

Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer - We will surely bless them with a good life and reward them according to the best of what they used to do. (Quran, 16:97)

A life of excellence (*ḥayāt ṭayyibah*) represents purity and tranquility, devoid of discomfort or distress.

فی أدوَم السُرور و أسبَغ الكرامة.

In the most enduring realm of joy and contentment, where no grief or sorrow shall ever touch again!

This is the life that Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) says: God defined asceticism in the Holy Qur'an, which is between two words.

لكيلا تأسوا على ما فاتكم ولا تفرحوا بما آتاكم.[164]

و مَن لم يأس على الماضی و لم يَفرح بالآتی فقد أخَذَ الزهدَ بطرفَيه.[165]

"[This is] so that you may not grieve over what has escaped you and not rejoice in what has come to you." And whoever does not despair of the past nor rejoices in the future has grasped asceticism by its two ends."

Asceticism (*zuhd*) means not grieving for what has passed from you and gone out of your hands and should not rejoice in what comes to you.

An individual's happiness and sorrow are contingent upon perceived gains and losses. It is joyfully welcomed when something is acquired, while its absence evokes sadness. This emotional response equates the self with external possessions. The loss of a possession diminishes the self, leading to dejection and despair. Conversely, acquisition strengthens and elevates the self, inducing happiness and contentment.

However, if one's soul reaches a state of fullness unaffected by additions or subtractions, akin to an ocean overflowing to the point of indifference to incoming or outgoing tides, then that individual has attained true asceticism (*zuhd*).

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) stated, 'Allah has defined asceticism (*zuhd*) in the Quran: "Grieve not for what has escaped you, nor rejoice for what has come to you." Whoever abides by these two principles has grasped the essence of asceticism.'

و أسبِغ الكَرامة و أتمّ العَيش.

Bestow upon me the utmost honor and the most bountiful sustenance. May this sustenance be abundant in honor, generosity, and Your favor. Let it not be a sustenance accompanied by humiliation, scarcity, or deprivation but rather a sustenance adorned with honor, sovereignty, greatness, and virtue.

إنّكَ تَفعَلُ ما تشاء.

Indeed, You do as You please; 'O Allah, You do whatever You will!'

و لا يَفعَلُ ما يشاءُ غيرُك.

None other than You can do as he pleases.

Imam Sajjad's request, remembrance, and special mercy of God

اللهُمّ خُصّني منكَ بخاصّةِ ذكرِك و لا تَجعَلْ شيئًا ممّا أتَقرّبُ به في آناءِ الليلِ و أطرافِ النّهارِ رياءً و لا سُمعةً و لا أشَرًا و لا بَطَرًا و اجْعَلني لك مِن الخاشعين.

O Allah, grant me the privilege of being among those especially remembered by You. Make none of my acts of worship performed during the day or night for reputation, or self-aggrandizement. Make me among those who are humble before You.

Individuals may feel affection for many people, viewing them collectively with fondness. Similarly, they may appreciate various things in life with a general liking. However, certain individuals evoke a uniquely profound and enduring affection. These individuals occupy a special place in one's thoughts, constantly present in the mind, regardless of physical proximity. This is what we refer to as 'special remembrance'.

O Allah, You have countless creations and servants under Your watch. None of them is hidden from Your knowledge, and You govern them all with Your compassionate mercy. You provide for them, guide them towards perfection, and set the universe in motion. Yet, You also possess a special mercy, a unique outpouring of grace, reserved for Your most devoted servants. You have declared, 'I have prepared for My servants what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has conceived.'

أعددتُ لعبادِيَ الصّالحين ما لا عينٌ رأتْ و لا أذنٌ سَمِعَت و لا خطرَ على قلبِ بشر.[166]

I have set aside specific bounties for My righteous servants, which transcend human perception. Were they visible, they would cease to be concealed within the divine sanctuary. Similarly, were they audible, their secrecy would be lost? Were they

comprehensible to the heart, they would no longer be unique creations of the divine realm. These are the exclusive gifts I have reserved for My righteous servants.

Therefore. Beyond the universal blessings, You extend to all creation out of Your boundless mercy, You possess unparalleled and extraordinary favors. Grant us a share of these exceptional gifts.

خُصَّنی منکَ بخاصَّةِ ذکرک.

Honor me with your special remembrance; 'Set me apart with the special memory you have of us'!

Including us in your cherished memories would not burden you. Your capacity for remembrance is vast and capable of encompassing multiple individuals simultaneously. Unlike us, who may struggle to love more than one person at a time, your love is boundless.

ما جعل الله لرجل من قلبين في جوفه.

God has not created two hearts within his breast for any man. (Quran, 33:4)

Your capacity is immeasurable; you could devote cosmic attention to each individual being. Our existence is defined by limitation: essence, potential, deprivation, humility, powerlessness, pride, and ignorance. Your being, however, embodies expansiveness, comprehension, growth, dominion, wisdom, vitality, and eternity. Therefore, if our inclusion among those you cherish aligns with your will, we humbly request it.

Explanation of Riya (Showing Off) and Sum'ah (Seeking Fame) and How They Are Among the Deceits of the Soul

و لا تَجعَل شيئًا ممّا أتقرَّبُ به فی آناءِ اللیلِ و أطرافِ النهارِ رياءً و لا سُمعةً.

Do not make anything that you draw near with during the hours of the night and the ends of the day for show and fame.

All my actions, from prayers and fasting to charity, supplication, and tears, from donning sacred garments to pilgrimage and jihad—every deed performed day and night, intended solely as a means of drawing closer to You, not as atonement for sin—must be devoid of ostentation, seeking fame, pride, or boasting.

Imam's words offer profound insights into the complexities of the human soul. A person may utter "Ya Allah" unconsciously during slumber, yet this carries no spiritual merit. Similarly, one might perform numerous acts of kindness, only to be misled by their ego, the nafs, which subtly suggests, "Leave your worldly comforts and embark on a pilgrimage to Mecca." Such insidious thoughts can infiltrate the mind without conscious awareness.

The nafs may also propose, "Instead of fulfilling your pilgrimage, donate this wealth anonymously to the poor." The individual, believing they have surpassed the spiritual value of Hajj, might act on this impulse. This delusion is rooted in pride and self-absorption, a distorted sense of superiority. They may mistakenly believe their actions to be purer than the Prophet Muhammad's, unaware that their motivations are driven by ego rather than genuine faith.

These are the deceptive tactics employed by the nafs, often concealed from the individual. One can be a fervent prayer, a skilled orator, and a philanthropist, yet remain a hypocrite. Hypocrisy arises when actions are motivated by the pursuit of recognition rather than a sincere desire for good. As long as the ego reigns, both pleasure and discomfort are subject to its influence, corrupting intentions.

Sum'ah refers to the desire for fame, recognition, and a reputation. It is the act of seeking the praise and admiration of others, often at the expense of sincerity and genuine intentions.

May my actions not be driven by self-promotion, arrogance, or pride. All my deeds, whether during the day or the night, are well-known and apparent. The deeds one does during the day are evident to all, while those performed at night are concealed. The actions undertaken in the darkness of the night, when no one is aware, are those intended to draw closer to Allah. These are not acts of transgression, theft, or sin but of devotion and supplication.

I implore You, O Allah, to make all my actions purely for Your sake. May my supplications and devotions not inflate my ego or lead me to believe I possess divine knowledge, which I would then wield over others, causing my arrogance and self-conceit to grow with each passing day. O Allah, spare me from such inclinations!

Divine Retribution for Every Action

Every act of worship produces a corresponding outcome. God may fulfill this desire if an individual's worship is motivated by worldly gain. Similarly, when Satan engaged in worship to serve his interests, God granted him dominion over humanity as a consequence until the Day of Judgment. It is a divine principle that no action, regardless of the agent, goes without a commensurate reward. Whether an individual seeks worldly benefits or eternal recompense, their desires will be met accordingly.

من كان يريد العاجلة عجلنا له فيها ما نشاء لمن نريد ثم جعلنا له جهنم يصلاها مذموما مدحورا * ومن أراد الأخرة وسعى لها سعيها وهو مؤمن فأولئك كان سعيهم مشكورا.

Whoever desires immediate gain, We hasten it for him therein for whom We will; then We make for him Hell, wherein he will burn, condemned, and rejected. But whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it as he should, and is a true believer, then his striving will come to fruition."(Quran 17:18-19)

Divine power is the ultimate cultivator. We sow the seeds, and they grow and flourish through divine will. The choice of seed is yours. Whether you plant a seed of bitterness or sweetness is entirely up to you. Regardless of your choice, divine providence will ensure growth.

Therefore, O Allah, I implore You to purify the intentions behind my actions, both day and night. Shield me from the allure of personal gain, the deception of Satan, and the distortion of right and wrong. Protect me from the perils of vanity, pride, and seeking fame. Grant me the sincerity of purpose and a heart free from worldly desires.

The Distinction Between Khushū' (Humility) and Khuḍū' (Submission)

و اجعلنی لک من الخاشعین

Make me one of those who are *Khāshi'īn*(humbles); 'Make me for Yourself from among the humble ones!'

The supplicant does not merely request to be placed among the humble; rather, they seek to be dedicated entirely to God as one of the humble.

Khuḍū' is the humility and submission that a person shows outwardly, for example, by bowing down or showing respect. This is called 'Khuḍū'. Khushū' is of the heart. If a person's heart submits to someone and has the humility of the heart, that is called Khushū'.

قد أفلح المؤمنون * الذين هم في صلاتهم خاشعون.

Indeed, the believers have succeeded. Those who are *Khāshi'īn* (humble) in their prayers. (Quran 23:1-2)

This does not imply that they merely exhibit outward signs of humility; such external displays should be performed appropriately during prayer. Rather, their humility is profound and heartfelt, emanating from a broken spirit. I beseech You, make me one of those whose hearts are shattered in Your presence, overwhelmed by Your will, and consumed by Your love."

Do not make me one of those who feign humility for their benefit. Rather, make me entirely Yours, a humble servant completely devoted to You, like a slave with a ring through his ear. Grant me the privilege of being among the truly humble in Your presence.

The Prophet's Rejection of Worldly Dominion

Gabriel approached the Prophet with an offer of unparalleled worldly power, presenting him with the keys to Earth's treasures. This offer was accompanied by the assurance that accepting it would not diminish his prophetic status or wealth. Yet, the Prophet Muhammad unequivocally declined.

Instead, he expressed a profound desire for servitude and humility, seeking to exist as a humble servant reliant solely on God's benevolence. This choice was not a diminishment of his prophetic role but a testament to his spiritual depth and devotion.

The Prophet distinguished between mere servitude and the state of true humility (Khushū'). He feared that while God might place an individual in His service, they might not necessarily attain heartfelt humility. This distinction is exemplified by comparing the Prophet to Prophet Solomon, who possessed worldly dominion and a place in God's service. However, the Prophet's spiritual station transcended earthly power, rooted in an absolute dependence on God and a sense of humility.

Ultimately, the Prophet's choice reflects a paradigm shift from worldly dominion to spiritual servitude. It emphasizes the primacy of a heart centered on God over material possessions and earthly power.

اللهمّ أعطني السّعة في الرّزق، و الأمن في الوطن، و قرّة العين في الأهل و المال و الولد، و المقام في نعمك عندي، والصحّة في الجسم، و القوّة في البدن، و السّلامة في الدّين، و استعملني بطاعتك و طاعة رسولك محمّد صلّى الله عليه و آله أبدا ما استعمرتني، و اجعلني من أوفر عبادك عندك نصيبا في كلّ خير أنزلته و تنزّله في شهر رمضان في ليلة القدر و ما أنت منزله في كلّ سنة من رحمة تنشرها و عافية تلبسها و بلية تدفعها و حسنات تتقبّلها و سيئات تتجاوز عنها، و ارزقني حجّ بيتك الحرام.

O Allah, grant me abundance in provision, security in my homeland, comfort in my family, wealth, and children, and a continuous state of Your blessings upon me. Grant me good health, strength, and soundness in religion. Employ me in Your obedience and the obedience of Your Messenger Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, as long as You employ me. Make me among Your most favored servants in every good thing You have sent down and will send down in the month of Ramadan on the Night of Decree and in every year, from Your mercy that You spread, Your well-being that You clothe us with, the calamities You avert, the good deeds You accept, and the sins You overlook. Grant me the pilgrimage to Your Sacred House.

This segment has become extensive, and further discussion within its confines would be time-consuming. Therefore, we will conclude our analysis for today. God willing, we will resume our exploration tomorrow evening. We have already elucidated a significant portion of this supplication, with only a limited amount remaining.

God, grant us the opportunity to complete our examination of this supplication within a few sessions following Ramadan. May Allah inspire us to fully embrace the essence of this supplication, allowing its intense meanings to resonate within our hearts and minds. May He guide our external and internal selves toward the path He has

ordained, liberating us from the shackles of evil, arrogance, ignorance, pride, deceit, and hypocrisy. May He purify our actions and surroundings from negative influences and grant us the strength to align our choices with His divine will. We implore Him to bestow upon us and our loved ones – our families, parents, children, dependents, and spiritual brethren – the same blessings sought by the Prophet Muhammad, elevating us to His righteous servants. May these supplications be fulfilled through the blessings of Muhammad and his pure family.

و صلّى الله على محمّد و آل محمّد.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.

Translation of the continuation of Abu Hamza's prayer by the commentator

بسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم

اَللّهُمَّ أعطِنى السَّعةَ فى الرِّزقِ و الأمنَ فى الوَطَنِ و قُرَّةَ العَينِ فى الأهلِ و المالِ و الوَلَدِ و المُقامَ فى نِعَمِکَ عِندى و الصحّةَ فى الجِسمِ و القُوَّةَ فى البَدَنِ و السَّلامةَ فى الدّينِ و استَعمِلنى بِطاعَتِکَ و طاعةِ رَسولِکَ محمّدٍ صلَّى اللهُ عليهِ و آلِهِ أبدًا ما استَعمَرتَنى و اجعَلنى مِن أوفرِ عِبادِکَ عِندَکَ نَصيبًا فى کُلِّ خَيرٍ أنزَلتَهُ و تُنزِلُهُ فى شَهرِ رَمَضانَ فى لَيلةِ القَدرِ و ما أنتَ مُنزِلُهُ فى کُلِّ سَنةٍ مِن رَحمةٍ تَنشُرُها و عافيةٍ تُلبِسُها و بَليّةٍ تَدفَعُها و حَسَناتٍ تَتَقَبَّلُها و سَيِّئاتٍ تَتَجاوَزُ عَنها.

O my God, Grant me abundance in my livelihood, security in my homeland, and joy for my family, property, children, and descendants. Grant me steadfastness in Your blessings, health in my body, strength in my limbs, and soundness in my faith. Make me steadfast and unwavering in my obedience to You and Your noble Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Grant me a greater share than all Your servants in all the goodness that You have bestowed in the month of Ramadan and will bestow on the Night of Power. Also, decree for me every mercy that You bestow throughout the year, every forgiveness that You grant to Your servants, every hardship that You ward off from them, every good deed that You accept from them, and every sin that You forgive them.

و ارزُقنى حَجَّ بيتِ الحَرامِ فى عامى هذا و فى کُلِّ عامٍ و ارزُقنى رِزقًا واسِعًا مِن فَضلِکَ الواسِعِ و اصرِف عَنّى يا سَيِّدى الأسواءَ و اقضِ عَنّى الدَّينَ و الظُّلاماتِ حَتّى لا أتَأذّى بِشَىءٍ مِنهُ و خُذ عَنّى بِأسماعِ و أبصارِ أعدائى و حُسّادى و الباغينَ عَلَىَّ و انصُرنى عَلَيهِم و أقِرَّ عَينى و فَرِّح قَلبى و اجعَل لى مِن هَمّى و کَربى فَرَجًا و مَخرَجًا و اجعَل مَن أرادَنى بِسوءٍ مِن جَميعِ خَلقِکَ تَحتَ قَدَمَىَّ و اکفِنى شَرَّ الشَّيطانِ و شَرَّ السُّلطانِ و سَيِّئاتِ عَمَلى و طَهِّرنى مِنَ الذُّنوبِ کُلِّها و أجِرنى مِنَ النّارِ بِعَفوِکَ و أدخِلنى الجَنّةَ بِرَحمَتِکَ و زَوِّجنى مِنَ الحورِ العينِ بِفَضلِکَ و ألحِقنى بِأوليائِکَ الصّالِحينَ محمّدٍ و آلِهِ الأبرارِ الطَّيِّبينَ الطّاهِرينَ الأخيارِ صَلَواتُکَ عَلَيهِم و عَلىٰ أجسادِهِم و أرواحِهِم و رَحمةُ اللهِ و بَرَکاتُهُ.

And grant me the pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allah this year and in the future. And grant me abundant sustenance from Your vast bounty. And O my Lord, ward off evil from around me and pay off my debts and what I am forced to take so that I do not suffer or be burdened. Weaken the eyes and ears of my enemies, enviers, and oppressors over me and grant me victory over them. And give light to my eyes and make my heart open and joyful. And decree relief and a way out in matters that cause me worry, grief, and distress. And humble and humiliate all of Your creatures who have evil intentions towards me. And protect me and keep me safe from the evil of the devil, the evil of the ruler, and my wrongdoings. And purify me from all sins and grant me safety from the fire of Hell with Your forgiveness. And grant me abode in Paradise with Your vast mercy. And grant me companionship and friendship with the heavenly maidens with Your grace. And gather me with the righteous guardians, Muhammad and his family, the chosen ones, the pure ones, the purified ones, and the best of them, upon whom and upon their bodies and spirits be Your blessings and peace.

إلهى و سَيِّدى و عِزَّتِکَ و جَلالِکَ لَئِن طالَبتَنى بِذُنوبى لَأُطالِبَنَّکَ بِعَفوِکَ و لَئِن طالَبتَنى بِلُؤمى لَأُطالِبَنَّکَ بِکَرَمِکَ و لَئِن أدخَلتَنى النّارَ لَأُخبِرَنَّ أهلَ النّارِ بِحُبّى لَکَ إلهى و سَيِّدى إن کُنتَ لا تَغفِرُ إلّا لِأوليائِکَ و أهلِ طاعَتِکَ فَإلىٰ مَن يَفزَعُ المُذنِبونَ و إن کُنتَ لا تُکرِمُ إلّا أهلَ الوَفاءِ بِکَ فَبِمَن يَستَغيثُ المُسيئونَ إلهى إن أدخَلتَنى النّارَ فَفى ذٰلِکَ سُرورُ عَدُوِّکَ و إن أدخَلتَنى الجَنّةَ فَفى ذٰلِکَ سُرورُ نَبِيِّکَ و أنا و اللهِ أعلَمُ أنَّ سُرورَ نَبِيِّکَ أحَبُّ إلَيکَ مِن سُرورِ عَدُوِّکَ.

اَللّهُمَّ إنّى أسألُکَ أن تَملَأَ قَلبى حُبًّا لَکَ و خَشيةً مِنکَ و تَصديقًا لَکَ و إيمانًا بِکَ و فَرَقًا مِنکَ و شَوقًا إلَيکَ يا ذا الجَلالِ و الإکرامِ حَبِّب إلَىَّ لِقاءَکَ و أحبِب لِقائى و اجعَل لى فى لِقائِکَ الرّاحةَ و الفَرَجَ و الکَرامةَ.

O my God and my Lord, by Your honor and majesty, if You were to consider my sins, I would consider Your forgiveness and pardon. And if You were to consider my

abasement and humiliation, I would consider Your generosity. And if You cast me into the fire of Hell, I would say to the people of Hell, "I love You."

O my God and my Lord, if Your forgiveness is only for Your close friends and those who obey You, then to whom should the sinners turn? And if Your generosity is only for those faithful to You, then to whom should the sinners cry for help?

O my God, if You cast me into Hell, it will be a cause of joy for Your enemies, and if You cast me into Paradise, it will be a cause of joy for Your Prophet. And by God, I know that the happiness of Your Prophet is more beloved to You than the joy of Your enemies.

O Lord, I ask You to fill my heart with love for You, fear of You, belief in You, faith in You, reverence for You, and longing for You. O Possessor of Majesty and Generosity. Increase my love for Your meeting, and draw me to You. And make Your meeting a comfort, a relief, and an honor for me.

اللهمّ ألحقني بصالح من مضى و اجعلني من صالح من بقي و خذ بي سبيل الصالحين و أعنّي على نفسي بما تعين به الصالحين على أنفسهم و اختم عملي بأحسنه و اجعل ثوابي منه الجنّة برحمتك و أعنّي على صالح ما أعطيتني و ثبّتني يا ربّ و لا تردّني في سوء استنقذتني منه يا ربّ العالمين.

اللهمّ إنّي أسألك إيمانا لا أجل له دون لقائك أحيني ما أحييتني عليه و توفّني إذا توفّيتني عليه و ابعثني إذا بعثتني عليه و أبرئ قلبي من الرّياء و الشكّ و السّمعة في دينك حتّى يكون عملي خالصا لك.

O Lord of the Worlds. Grant me the company of the righteous among those who have passed away and place me among the righteous in the future. Establish me on the path of the righteous, and as You have aided the righteous in mastering their souls, aid me in mastering my soul. Bring my actions to the best possible conclusion, and make my reward for my deeds Paradise by Your mercy.

Help me to make good use of Your blessings and keep me steadfast on Your path. Do not return me to the wrongdoings from which You have saved me.

O, my Lord, I ask You for a faith whose end is not less than meeting You. Keep me alive in that faith as long as Your will is for me to live, and let me die in that faith at the time Your will is for me to die. And raise me in that faith on the Day of Judgment. Purify my heart from hypocrisy, doubt, and self-display in Your religion so that my actions may be purely for Your sake alone.

اللهمّ أعطني بصيرة في دينك و فهما في حكمك و فقها في علمك و كفلين من رحمتك و ورعا يحجزني عن معاصيك و بيّض وجهي بنورك و اجعل رغبتي فيما عندك و توفّني في سبيلك و على ملّة رسولك صلّى الله عليه و آله.

اللهمّ إنّي أعوذ بك من الكسل و الفشل و الهمّ و الجبن و البخل و الغفلة و القسوة و الذّلّة و المسكنة و الفقر و الفاقة و كلّ بليّة و الفواحش (ما ظهر منها وما بطن)[167] و أعوذ بك من نفس لا تقنع و بطن لا يشبع و قلب لا يخشع و دعاء لا يسمع و عمل لا ينفع و أعوذ بك يا ربّ على نفسي و ديني و مالي و على جميع ما رزقتني من الشّيطان الرّجيم (إنك أنت السميع العليم)[168]

O All-Seeing Lord, grant me insight into my faith. Bestow upon me the true understanding of Your commands and decrees, the comprehension of Your knowledge, and an abundance of Your mercy. Grant me the piety that will deter me from Your sins. Illuminate my countenance with Your light, direct my desires towards that which is with You, ordain my death in Your path, and let me die following the religion of Your Prophet, upon whom be peace and blessings.

O Lord, I seek refuge in You from laziness and sluggishness, from worry and sorrow, from fear and stinginess, from negligence and hardness of heart, from abasement and helplessness, from poverty and hardship, and all afflictions and misdeeds, both apparent and hidden.

I seek refuge in You from a soul that is never satisfied, from a belly that is never full, from a heart that is devoid of humility, from an unheard prayer, and from knowledge that is of no benefit.

O my Lord, I seek refuge in You from my soul, from my religion, from my wealth, and from all that You have ordained as my provision, from the accursed Satan. Indeed, You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

اللهم إنه لا يجيرني منك أحد و لا أجد من دونك ملتحدا فلا تجعل نفسي في شيء من عذابك و لا تردني بهلكة و لا تردني بعذاب اليم. اللهم تقبل مني و أعل ذكري و ارفع درجتي و حط وزري و لا تذكرني بخطيئتي و اجعل ثواب مجلسي و ثواب منطقي و ثواب دعائي رضاك و الجنة؛ أعطني يا رب جميع ما سألتك و زدني من فضلك إني إليك راغب يا رب العالمين.

Holy God, none can shield me from Your punishment, nor do I find any sanctuary except in You. Therefore, I implore You not to subject my nafs to any portion of Your wrath. Do not turn me away with ruin or inflict grievous torment upon me.

O Allah, accept my deeds and elevate my remembrance. Grant me a higher station and ease the burdens I carry. Forgive my transgressions and let the reward for my moments of contemplation, my utterances, and my supplications be Your contentment and Paradise.

My Lord, grant me all that I have petitioned You for and bestow upon me even more from Your boundless favor. For I yeam only for You, O Lord of the Universes.

اللهم إنك أنزلت في كتابك أن نعفو عمن ظلمنا و قد ظلمنا أنفسنا فاعف عنا فإنك أولى بذلك منا و أمرتنا أن لا نرد سائلا عن أبوابنا و قد جئتك سائلا فلا تردني إلا بقضاء حاجتي و أمرتنا بالإحسان إلى ما ملكت أيماننا و نحن أرقاؤك فاعتق رقابنا من النار يا مفزعي عند كربتي و يا غوثي عند شدتي إليك فزعت و بك استغثت و لذت لا ألوذ بسواك و لا أطلب الفرج إلا منك فصل على محمد و آل محمد فأغثني و فرج عني يا من يقبل اليسير و يعفو عن الكثير اقبل مني اليسير و اعف عني الكثير إنك أنت الرحيم الغفور

اللهم إني أسألك إيمانا تباشر به قلبي و يقينا حتى أعلم أنه لن يصيبني إلا ما كتبت لي و رضني من العيش بما قسمت لي يا أرحم الراحمين.[169]

O God, You have ordained in Your Book that we extend forgiveness to those who have wronged us.[170] We have wronged ourselves, so forgive us. we implore Your forgiveness, for You possess the ultimate capacity to pardon

You have commanded us not to turn away a supplicant from our doorsteps.[171] As a supplicant, I come to You; therefore, do not dismiss me except by fulfilling my need.

You have commanded us to be compassionate towards those under our dominion.[172] As Your servants, we implore You to deliver us from the torment of Hellfire. You are our refuge in distress and our support in adversity.

I turn in fear to You, and upon You, I rely for succor. I seek refuge in You and desire no escape other than through You. Bestow blessings upon Muhammad and his family. Grant me Your aid and alleviate my burdens, O You Who accept even the smallest offering and forgive the greatest sins. Accept from me what is little and forgive me what is much, for You are the Most Merciful, the Most Forgiving.

I beseech You for a faith that permeates my heart and a conviction in Your Oneness so absolute that I acknowledge with certainty that no event befalls me except by Your divine decree. Grant me contentment with Your divine apportionment, O Most Merciful of the merciful.

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قال اللهُ عزّوجلّ: ما من شيءٍ أتردّدُ فيه مثل تردّدي عند قبض روح المؤمن! يكرهُ الموتَ و أنا أكرهُ مساءتَهُ! 2

اللهمّ احرُسني بحراستك، و احفظني بحفظك، و اكلأني بكلاءتك، و ارزُقني حجّ بيتك الحرام في عامنا هذا و في كلّ عام، و زيارة قبر نبيّك و الأئمّة عليهمُ السّلامُ، و لا تُخلني يا ربّ من تلك المشاهد الشّريفة و المواقف الكريمة! 11

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قوّيته و الذليل الذي أعززته و السقيم الذي شفيته و السائل الذي أعطيته و المذنب الذي سترته و الخاطئ الذي أقلته و أنا القليل الذي كثّرته و المستضعف الذي نصرته و أنا الطريد الذي آويته! 28
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إلهي و سيدي و عزتك و جلالك لئن طالبتني بذنوبي لأطالبنك بعفوك و لئن طالبتني بلؤمي لأطالبنك بكرمك و لئن أدخلتني النار لأخبرن أهل النار بحبي لك إلهي و سيدي إن كنت لا تغفر إلا لأوليائك و أهل طاعتك فإلى من يفزع المذنبون و إن كنت لا تكرم إلا أهل الوفاء بك فبمن يستغيث المسيئون إلهي إن أدخلتني النار ففي ذلك سرور عدوك و إن أدخلتني الجنة ففي ذلك سرور نبيك و أنا و الله أعلم أن سرور نبيك أحب إليك من سرور عدوك 142

اللهم إني أسألك أن تملأ قلبي حبا لك و خشية منك و تصديقا لك و إيمانا بك و فرقا منك و شوقا إليك يا ذا الجلال و الإكرام حبب إلي لقاءك و أحبب لقائي و اجعل لي في لقائك الراحة و الفرج و الكرامة 142

اللهم ألحقني بصالح من مضى و اجعلني من صالح من بقي و خذ بي سبيل الصالحين و أعني على نفسي بما تعين به الصالحين على أنفسهم و اختم عملي بأحسنه و اجعل ثوابي منه الجنة برحمتك و أعني على صالح ما أعطيتني و ثبتني يا رب و لا تردني في سوء استنقذتني منه يا رب العالمين 143

اللهم إني أسألك إيمانا لا أجل له دون لقائك أحيني ما أحييتني عليه و توفني إذا توفيتني عليه و ابعثني إذا بعثتني عليه و أبرئ قلبي من الرياء و الشك و السمعة في دينك حتى يكون عملي خالصا لك 143

اللهم أعطني بصيرة في دينك و فهما في حكمك و فقها في علمك و كفلين من رحمتك و ورعا يحجزني عن معاصيك و بيض وجهي بنورك و اجعل رغبتي فيما عندك و توفني في سبيلك و على ملة رسولك صلى الله عليه و آله 143

اللهم إني أعوذ بك من الكسل و الفشل و الهم و الجبن و البخل و الغفلة و القسوة و الذلة و المسكنة و الفقر و الفاقة و كل بلية و الفواحش (ما ظهر منها وما بطن) و أعوذ بك من نفس لا تقنع و بطن لا يشبع و قلب لا يخشع و دعاء لا يسمع و عمل لا ينفع و أعوذ بك يا رب على نفسي و ديني و مالي و على جميع ما رزقتني من الشيطان الرجيم (إنك أنت السميع العليم) 143

اللهم إنه لا يجيرني منك أحد و لا أجد من دونك ملتحدا فلا تجعل نفسي في شيء من عذابك و لا تردني بهلكة و لا تردني بعذاب أليم اللهم تقبل مني و أعل ذكري و ارفع درجتي و حط وزري و لا تذكرني بخطيئتي و اجعل ثواب مجلسي و ثواب منطقي و ثواب دعائي رضاك و الجنة؛ أعطني يا رب جميع ما سألتك و زدني من فضلك إني إليك راغب يا رب العالمين 144

اللهم إنك أنزلت في كتابك أن نعفو عمن ظلمنا و قد ظلمنا أنفسنا فاعف عنا فإنك أولى بذلك منا و أمرتنا أن لا نرد سائلا عن أبوابنا و قد جئتك سائلا فلا تردني إلا بقضاء حاجتي و أمرتنا بالإحسان إلى ما ملكت أيماننا و نحن أرقاؤك فاعتق رقابنا من النار يا مفزعي عند كربتي و يا غوثي عند شدتي إليك فزعت و بك استغثت و لذت لا ألوذ بسواك و لا أطلب الفرج إلا منك فصل على محمد و آل محمد فأغثني و فرج عني يا من يقبل اليسير و يعفو عن الكثير اقبل مني اليسير و اعف عني الكثير إنك أنت الرحيم الغفور 144

اللهم إني أسألك إيمانا تباشر به قلبي و يقينا حتى أعلم أنه لن يصيبني إلا ما كتبت لي و رضني من العيش بما قسمت لي يا أرحم الراحمين 144

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[1] Paragraph of the supplication of Abu Hamza Thumali from Misbāḥ al-Mutahajjid, vol. 2, pp. 587-595.
[2] Refer to Al-Furūq fi al-Lughah, p. 199.
[3] al-Kāfi, vol. 6, p. 496.
[4] Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 4, p. 268: Our journey to Najaf is not merely a physical but a spiritual pilgrimage. We visit, pray, and seek the intercession of His Eminence out of deep respect for his body and the spiritual connection it represents. His Eminence's soul and spirit, however, transcend physical boundaries; (لا شرقية و لا غربية). Otherwise, the soul and spirit of His Eminence encompasses everywhere; (لا شرقية و لا غربية).*

He is not confined to a specific place but omnipresent. He is the Supreme Governor of the Divine Factory, Exalted and Honored. Adam, the father of mankind, interceded with him for salvation and attaining his goal. Noah, Moses, Jesus, and all the prophets (peace be upon them) interceded with him.

*The phrase "(لا شرقية و لا غربية)" is from the Quran, Surah An-Nur (24):35. It means "neither in the east nor in the west."

[5] To learn about the virtues of visiting holy sites and the presence of angels in those places, please refer to "Al-Mazār Al-Kabīr" by Ibn Al-Mashhadī, page 31.
[6] Kulliyyat-i Ash'ār wa Āthār-i Farsī Shaykh Bahā'ī (Collection of Persian Poems and Works of Shaykh Bahā'ī), Rubā'iyyāt (quatrains), p. 90.
[7] To learn about the true meaning of repentance, please refer to "*Anwār-i al-Malakūt*", vol. 1, pp. 157-172.
[8] qul huwa llāhu aḥad is a verse from Al-Ikhlāṣ (Arabic: الإخلاص, "Sincerity"), also known as the Declaration of God's Unity and al-Tawhid (Arabic: التوحيد, "Monotheism"), which is the 112th chapter (sūrah) of the Quran.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

bi-smi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm

قل هو الله احد

qul huwa llāhu aḥad

الله الصمد

allāhu ṣ-ṣamad

لم يلد و لم يولد

lam yalid wa-lam yūlad

و لم يكن له كفوا احد

wa-lam yaku l-lahū kufuwan aḥad

Translation: In The Name Of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful . Say, 'He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one, nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.' This powerful message is at the heart of our faith.

"'Innā 'Anzalnāhu" is a verse from Al-Qadr (Arabic: القدر, "Power, Fate"), which is the 97th chapter (sūrah) of the Qur'an, with 5 āyāt or verses.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. إنا أنزلناه في ليلة القدر. وما أدراك ما ليلة القدر. ليلة القدر خير من ألف شهر. تنزل الملئكه و الروح فيها باذن ربهم من كل امر. سلام هى حتى مطلع الفجر.

Translation: In The Name Of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful .Surely, We revealed it on the al-Qadr night. And what will make you comprehend the al-Qadr night? The al-Qadr night is better than a thousand months. The angels and the spirit descend in it by the permission of their Lord for every affair. Peace! it is till the break of the morning.

[9] Al-Mīṣbāḥ al-Munīr fi Gharīb al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr, vol. 2, p. 596.
[10] For more information on the conditions and etiquette of dua, refer to: Anwār-i al-Malakūt, vol. 2, pp. 351-412.
[11] To learn about the ugliness of "lie of actions" or hypocrisy, please refer to *Mihr-i Tābān*, page 337, the story of the Darwīsh Bīdār 'Alī.
[12] Quran, 1:5.
[13] For more information on the meaning of *zuhd* (asceticism) and its degrees and levels, please refer to the software "*Awāy-i Malakūt*", explanation of the hadith of 'Unwān Baṣrī", sessions 129-144.
[14] Al-Kashkūl, Shaykh Bahā'ī, volume 3, page. 13.
[15] 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā (peace be upon him), vol. 2, p. 48.
[16] Ibid, p. 24:

عن عبدالعظيم بن عبدالله الحسني عن محمود بن أبي البلاد قال: سمعت الرضا عليه السلام يقول: "من لم يشكر المنعم من المخلوقين، لم يشكر الله عز وجل".

From 'Abdul'azīm ibn 'Abdullāh al-Hasanī from Mahmūd ibn Abī al-Bilād, who said: I heard al- Ridā (peace be upon him) say: He who does not thank the benefactor among the creatures, does not thank Allah The Exalted.

[17] Allāh Shināsī, volume 3, page 344: In the book Munyat al-murīd, it is narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (peace be upon him) that he said:

قامَ عيسَى بنُ مريمَ عليهما السّلامُ خطيبًا في بني إسرائيل فقال: يا بني إسرائيل! لا تُحدِّثوا الجُهّالَ بالحكمةِ فتظلموها، و لا تمنعوها أهلَها فتظلموهُم*!

Isa ibn Maryam (peace be upon them) stood up as a preacher among the Bani Israel and said: O Bani Israel! Do not speak of wisdom to the ignorant, for you will wrong it, and do not withhold it from its people, for you will wrong them!

*Al-Kāfī, vol. 1, p. 42.

[18] Tahdhib al-Ahkām, vol. 3, p. 220.

[19] Imām Shināsī, vol. 10, p. 165.

وواعدنا موسى ثلاثين ليلة وأتممناها بعشر فتم ميقات ربه أربعين ليلة.

And We promised Moses thirty nights, and completed them with ten [more], so the appointment of his Lord was forty nights. (Quran, 7:142)

[20] Dīwān Hāfiz, Ghazal. 454.

[21] For more information on the special properties of the number forty in the manifestation of abilities and the transformation of the spiritual state into Maqām, refer to Risālah Siyr wa Suluk attributed to Bahr al-'Ulūm, pp. 26-41.

[22] Dīwān Hāfiz, Ghazal. 249:

Four decades long, with burdens on our soul,
We bore the weight of sorrow's heavy toll.
Through trials deep, with hearts that ached and bled,
We yearned for solace, 'til at last it spread.
A curious comfort, in a youthful brew,
A two-year vintage, not a solace true.
For fleeting pleasure masks a deeper plight,
A search for peace that lingers through the night.

[23] Mir'āt al-'uqūl fī sharh akhbār Āl al-Rasūl, Vol. 10, P. 355: Imam Baqir (peace be upon him) said:

بئسَ العبدُ عبدٌ يكونُ ذا وجهين و ذا لسانين؛ يُطري أخاهُ شاهدًا و يأكلُهُ غائبًا! إن أُعطي حسدَهُ و إن ابتُلي خذلَهُ!

What a bad servant is he who has two faces and two tongues; he praises his brother when he is present and backbites him when he is absent! He envies him if he is given a blessing, and if he is afflicted, he forsakes him!

[24] Quran, 9:105; Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 2, p. 284: And say, O Prophet! that whatever you do, God, His Messenger, and the believers, will soon see your deeds.

[25] Ghurar al-hikam wa durar al-kalim, p. 420,
from Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him):

صاحِبِ العُقَلاءَ و جالِسِ العُلَماءَ و اغلِبِ الهوى تُرافِقِ الملأَ الأعلى.

Accompany the wise, sit with the scholars, and overcome your desires, so that you may be a companion of the highest realm.

[26] Misbāh al-Mutahajjid, vol. 2, p. 586.

[27] Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 93, p. 248; Al-Kāfī, vol. 4, p. 65, with slight differences.

[28] Dīwān Hāfiz, Ghazal 321.

[29] Al-Mahāsin, vol. 2, pp. 159 and 160.

[30] al-Amālī, Shaykh Tusī, p. 414:

أخبرَنا محمّدُ بنُ محمّدٍ، قال: ... قال: حدّثني الحسنُ بنُ ضوءٍ، عن أبي‌عبدالله عليه السّلام، قال: قال عليُّ بنُ الحسين، زينُ العابدين عليهما السّلام: قال اللهُ عزّوجلّ: ما مِن شيءٍ أتردّدُ فيه مثلَ تردّدي عند قبضِ روحِ المؤمن! يكرهُ الموتَ و أنا أكرهُ مساءتَهُ! فإذا حضرَهُ أجلُهُ الذي لا تأخيرَ فيه، بعثنا إليه بريحانتينِ منَ الجنّةِ تُسمّى إحداهُما المُسخيةَ و الأخرى المُنسيةَ، فأمّا المُسخيةُ فتُسخيه عن مالِه، و أمّا المُنسيةُ فتُنسيه أمرَ الدّنيا.

Muhammad ibn Muhammad narrated: Hasan ibn Daw' narrated to me from Abu Abdillah (peace be upon him), who said: Ali ibn al-Husayn, Zayn al-Abidin (peace be upon them), said: God Almighty said: "There is nothing I hesitate about as much as I hesitate about taking the soul of a believer. He hates death, and I hate to make him suffer! So when his inevitable time comes, We send him two flowers from Paradise, one called the Muskhiyyah and the other called the Munsiyyah. The Muskhiyyah makes him generous with his wealth, and the Munsiyyah makes him forget about the world."

[31] al-Amālī, Shaykh Ṭusī, p. 414.

[32] Al-Kāfi, Vol. 3, p. 127:

ابو عليٍّ الأشعريّ ... قال: حدّثني أبو اليقظان، عمّارٌ الأسديّ، عن أبي‌عبدالله عليه السّلام، قال: قال رسولُ الله صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم: "لو أنّ مؤمناً أقسم على ربّه أن لا يُميتَه، ما أماتَه أبداً! ولكن إذا كان ذلك أو إذا حضر أجلُه، بعث الله عزّوجلّ إليه ريحين: ريحاً يقال لها المُنسية، و ريحاً يقال لها المُسخية. فأمّا المُنسية فإنّها تُنسيه أهلَه و مالَه، و أمّا المُسخية فإنّها تُسخي نفسَه عن الدّنيا حتّى يختار ما عند الله.

Abu Ali al-Ash'ari said: Abu al-Yaqzan, Ammar al-Asadi, narrated to me from Abi Abdillah (peace be upon him), who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said: "If a believer swears to his Lord that he will not die, he will never die! But when that happens or when his time comes, Allah Almighty sends two winds to him: a wind called the 'Munsiyyah' and a wind called the 'Muskhiyyah'. As for the Munsiyyah, it makes him forget his family and his wealth, and as for the Muskhiyyah, it makes him give up the world until he chooses what is with Allah."

[33] Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ, Ghazal 117.

[34] For more information on this topic, please refer to Ma'ād Shināsī (The Study of the Afterlife), Vol. 2, pp. 28-40.

[35] For more information on the prohibition of abortion in Islamic law, please refer to Risālah Nikāhīyah (Treatise on Marriage), p. 23.

[36] Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid, vol. 2, p. 589.

[37] Gulistān Sa'dī, Introduction.

[38] Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid, vol. 2, p. 588.

[39] Quran, 2: 120 & 145; Quran, 5): 48, 49 & 77; Quran, 6:56, 119 & 150; Quran, 13:37; Quran, 23:71; Quran. 28:50; Quran, 30:29; Quran, 42:15; Quran, 45:18; Quran, 47:14 & 16; Quran, 54:3.

[40] For more information on the "difference in human repentance according to the degree of sin," refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, Vol. 7, p. 160.

[41] al-Mustarshid fi imāmat 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib 'alayhi al-salām (peace be upon him). p. 151:

حدّثني سفيانُ بنُ عُيينة الخطميّ، قال: حدّثني: أنّ الزّهريّ عزّر غلاماً له، فمات تحتَ يده، فقنط حتّى أتى عليّ بن الحسين عليه السّلام فقال له: "قنوطُك أعظمُ من ذنبِك!

Sufyan ibn Uyaynah said: Zuhri punished a slave of his, and the slave died under his hand. So he despaired until he came to Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him). He told him, "Your despair is greater than your sin!"

[42] For more information on the potential and actual power in the world and the afterlife, please efer to Ma'ād Shināsī, Vol. 5, pp. 188-190.

[43] Al-Kāfi, vol. 2, p. 435.

[44] For more information on the meaning of "khayr" and its linguistic derivation, please refer to Allāh Shināsī, Vol. 2, p. 239.

[45] For more information, please refer to Nūr-i Malakūt-i Qur'ān, vol. 1, Discussion Two: "The Quran is the guide to the paths of peace and the turning away from darkness to light, and the entry into the straight path." & Al-Mīzān fi Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. 10, p. 39.

[46] Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, vol. 15, p. 380; Lisān al-Arab, vol. 12, p. 34; Majma al-Bayān fi Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. 4, p. 74:

الأمّيّ، ذكر في معناه أقوال :أحدها: أنه الذى لا يكتب و لا يقرأ؛ و ثانيها: أنه منسوب إلى الأمة، و المعنى: أنه على جبلة الأمة قبل استفادة الكتابة، و قيل: أن المراد بالأمة العرب لأنها لم تكن تحسن الكتابة؛ و ثالثها: أنه منسوب إلى الأم، و المعنى: أنه على ما ولدته أمه قبل تعلّم الكتابة؛ و رابعها: أنه منسوب إلى أم القرى و هى مكة، و هو المروى عن أبي‌جعفر الباقر عليه السّلام.

Several meanings have been mentioned for the term "Ummī-امي":

1. One meaning is "one who does not write or read."
2. Another meaning is "one who belongs to the nation (الأمة)," meaning that he is in the state of the nation before learning to write. It has also been said that the intended nation here is the Arabs because they did not know how to write.
3. A third meaning is "one who belongs to the mother (ام)," meaning that he is in the state where his mother gave birth to him before he learned to write.
4. A fourth meaning is "one who belongs to the mother of cities (ام القرى), which is Mecca." Abu Ja'far al-Baqir (peace be upon him) narrates this meaning.

Wilāyat-i Faqīh dar Ḥukūmat-i Islām, vol. 2, p. 74:

His Eminence [Imam Hasan al-Askari (peace be upon him)], in his interpretation of the word "Ummī" states:

إنّ الأمّيّ، منسوبٌ إلى "أمّه" أى: هو كما خرج من بطن أمّه، لا يقرأ و لا يكتب؛ امّى.

'Ummī' is derived from 'umm', meaning mother. So, 'Ummī' means someone like when he came out of his mother's womb; he does not read and write.

[47] Majma' al-Baḥrayn, vol. 3, p. 246:

"و عن بعضهم: جزيرة العرب خمسة أقسام: تهامة و نجد و حجاز و عروض و يمن؛ فأمّا تهامة فهي النّاحية الجنوبي من الحجاز، و أمّا نجد فهي النّاحية الّتي بين الحجاز و العراق، و أمّا الحجاز فهو جبل يقبل من اليمن حتّى يتّصل بالشّام و فيه المدينة و عمّان، و سمّي حجازا لأنّه حجز بين نجد و تهامة، و أمّا العروض فهو اليمامة إلى البحرين، و أمّا اليمن فهو أعلى من تهامة."

"The Arabian Peninsula has five parts: Tihamah, Najd, Hijaz, Aruz, and Yemen. Tihamah is the southern region of the Hijaz, and Najd is between the Hijaz and Iraq. Hijaz is a mountain range that extends from Yemen to the Levant and contains the cities of Medina and Amman. It is called the Hijaz because it separates Najd from Tihamah. Aruz is the region from Yamamah to Bahrain. Yemen is higher than Tihamah."

Tihamah is the narrow coastal plain stretching along the Arabian Peninsula's Red Sea coast. It is a hot and humid region with a tropical climate. The vegetation is mostly desert scrub, but some oases and coastal forests also exist. Tihamah is home to several important cities, including Jeddah, Mecca, and Hodeidah.

Najd is the vast plateau in the interior of the Arabian Peninsula. It is a dry region with a desert climate. The vegetation is mostly desert scrub, but some oases and mountain ranges also exist. Najd is home to several important cities, including Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, and Ta'if.

Hijaz is a mountainous region that runs along the western coast of the Arabian Peninsula. It is a cooler and more temperate region than Tihamah and Najd. The vegetation is mostly mountains and forests, but there are also some oases and coastal plains. Hijaz is home to several important cities, including Medina, Mecca, and Jeddah.

'Aruz is the region between Najd and the Persian Gulf. It is dry with a desert climate. The vegetation is mostly desert scrub, but some oases and mountain ranges also exist. 'Aruz is home to several important cities, including Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, and Dammam.

Yemen is a mountainous region in the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. It is cooler and more temperate than Tihamah and Najd. The vegetation is mostly mountains and forests, but there are also some oases and coastal plains. Yemen has several important cities, including Sana'a, the capital, and Aden.

[48] Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulaynī narrates in al-Kafi, volume 2, page 24, with his own chain of transmission, that: Qasim al-Sayrafi, a friend and companion of Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar, said: I heard Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) say:

الإسلام يحقن به الدّم و تؤدّى به الأمانة و تستحلّ به الفروج، و الثّواب على الإيمان.

Islam is that which preserves blood, restores trust, and makes marriage permissible. But the reward is only for true faith.

This hadith teaches us that Islam is a religion that promotes peace, security, and trust. It also teaches us that the ultimate reward in the afterlife is only for those who truly believe in God.

[49] Abu Sufyan and his son Muawiyah were among those who converted to Islam to save their lives. For more information, refer to Matla' al-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 373, and vol. 10, p. 510. The argument of Qais ibn Ubadah with Muawiyah about their apparent Islam and inner hypocrisy is mentioned in Anwar al-Malakut, vol. 2, p. 75.

[50] For information on the forgiveness of sins through the oneness of God and faith in God, from the perspective of the Quran and traditions, refer to Anwar al-Malakut, vol. 1, pp. 159-164.

[51] For more information on the place of fear and hope in the purification and perfection of the human nafs, refer to Misbah al-Shari'ah, p. 180, "The Eighty-Fifth Chapter on Fear and Hope".

[52] Quran, 3:8.

[53] Sharh Fuṣuṣ al-Ḥikam, p. 761: It should be known that mercy is an attribute of the divine and is one truth. However, according to the fact that its requirement is sometimes the names of the essence and sometimes the names of the attributes, it is divided into essential and attributive, and each of these two categories is general and specific. according to other considerations, it is branched out until it reaches one hundred mercies. As the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) pointed out in his saying:

إنّ لله مائة رحمة أعطى واحدة منها لأهل الدّنيا كلّها، و ادّخر تسعة و تسعين إلى الآخرة يرحم بها عباده؛*

Verily, Allah the Most High has one hundred doors of mercy. He has only given one of them to the world's people, and He has kept ninety-nine of them for the Day of Judgment so that He will encompass all of His servants with His mercy.

The general and specific mercies (raḥmah 'āmmah and raḥmah Khāṣṣah) of the Essence of God are those mentioned in the Bismillah in the names of Raḥmān and Raḥīm. The Raḥmāniyah mercy is universal, encompassing all things in essence and knowledge, a vast and all-encompassing expression of God's mercy. The Raḥīmiyah mercy is particular, as it specifies this universal mercy, making it personal and intimate.

The attributes of Raḥmān and Raḥīm, mentioned in the opening verse of the Quran (the Fatihah), are also attributes of God. This means that God is both the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful. The first of these two mercies, Raḥmān, is a general rule for the general, essential mercy.

This means that God's mercy encompasses all creation without exception. The essential mercy is the effusion of general, scientific existence, which means that God has brought into existence all things and knows all things. the second mercy, Rahīm, is the specialization of God's mercy according to the original aptitude of each created being. This means God's mercy is general and specific to each individual being. God knows the needs and capacities of each being, and He provides them with the mercy they need. These two attributive mercies, Raḥmān and Raḥīm, result from the two essential mercies, general and specific. This means that God's attributive mercies are a manifestation of His essential mercies.

The editor of the book, His Eminence Ayatollah Hassan Zadeh Amoli, says in the commentary on page 898: The Rumi mystic says in the first book of the Mathnawī Ma'nawī:

ان یکی جودش گدا ارد پدید
و این دگر بخشد گدایان را مزید.

One brings the beggar into existence through his generosity,
And the other gives more to the beggars.
(With open hand, one grants a life of need,
A beggar born from generous, noble deed.
The other steps beyond, a heart so kind,
A greater gift for those they leave behind.)

The first line refers to the Raḥmāniyah mercy, and the second line refers to the Raḥīmiyah mercy.

*Tafsir Rūḥ al-Bayān, vol. 1, p. 8.

[54] Tafsīr al-Mīzān, vol. 13, p. 474, under the verse:

فوجدا عبدا من عبادنا أتيناه رحمة من عندنا و علمناه من لدنا علما.

So they found one of Our servants to whom We had given mercy from Us and had taught him knowledge from Us. (Quran, 18:65; Asrār-i Malakūt, vol. 2, p. 323) *

Regarding the mercy and knowledge that is granted by God to the servant, it says: Every blessing is a mercy from God to His creation, but some of them have the causes of the world of being as intermediaries in their being mercy, such as the apparent material blessings; and some of them are mercy without intermediaries, such as the inner blessings of prophethood, wilayah, and its branches and its stations.

The phrase "from Us" (مِنْ عِنْدِنَا) used to describe mercy suggests that it originates solely from God, with no external influence. This refers to the second category, "inner blessings."

wilāyah (guardianship) is considered exclusive to God's essence, as He Himself states: "So Allah is the walī" (فَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ)."Prophethood, however, differs. Other entities besides God, such as the noble angels, play a role in facilitating revelation and similar acts.

Therefore, considering the phrase "a mercy from Us" (رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا) is used with the emphatic "nun-ن," implying an emphasis on the source is God, rather than "from me" (من عندی), it can be argued that this refers to prophethood, not wilayah. This interpretation aligns with the understanding of those who interpret the aforementioned word as prophethood.***

عِنْدِنَا وَ عَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا.

... and We taught him knowledge from Us.

Like the concept of mercy, this knowledge is not acquired through sensory perception, logical reasoning, or any other form of human effort. The phrase min ladunna (from us) emphasizes this point. It signifies that this knowledge is divinely bestowed (Ladunnī) and exclusive to the Awliyā' (saints or spiritual guardians). Furthermore, the concluding verses of the passage suggest that this knowledge pertains to the interpretation of events.

* At this time, they came to Our righteous servant, to whom We had given mercy and grace from Ourselves and made him knowledgeable of Ladunnī knowledge from Ourselves.

** Quran, 42:9.

*** Majma' al-Bayān, vol. 6, p. 483.

[55] Quran, 3:8; Excerpts from Abu Ḥamza al-Thumālī supplication.

[56] Iqbāl al-A'māl, vol. 2, p. 678: When Imām Kāẓim (peace be upon him) was exiled to Baghdad on the 27th of Rajab in the year 279 AH, he offered a prayer to the divine court:

...و قد عَلِمتُ أنّ أفضل زادِ الرّاحل إليك عزمُ إرادةٍ يختارُكَ بها و قد ناجاك بعزمِ الإرادة قلبي و أسألُكَ بكلّ دعوةٍ دعاك بها راجٍ بلّغتَهُ أملَهُ...

... And I have known for certain that the best provision for the traveler to You is a firm resolve that chooses You with it. And my heart has truly called out to You with such resolve and will, and I ask You with every prayer that a hopeful person has called out to You with, and You have brought them to their hopes ...

[57] For information on the necessity of persistence and insistence in supplication (dua), refer to Anwār-i Malakūt, Vol. 2, p. 374, "Tenth Condition of Supplication."

[58] The famous saying, "The believer is like a mountain that cannot be shaken by storms," is derived from a hadith about the virtues of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) found in al-Kāfī, vol. 1, p. 454,

and al-Manāqib, vol. 2, p. 347.

In Sharh al-Kāfī, al-Uṣūl wa al-Ruwḍah (by Mullā Ṣāliḥ Māzandarānī), vol. 9, p. 172, it is said: "Similar to what is narrated from him (the Prophet) (peace be upon him and his family): 'The believer is like a mountain that cannot be shaken by storms.'

المؤمن كالجبل لا تحركه العواصف.

In Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 2, p. 128, it is said: "The believer, with a strong heart and firm resolve, looks to the eternal world and is never shaken by the whispers of Satan. Like a steadfast mountain, he does not fear the strong storms."

[59] Quran 41:48: And those they call upon besides Allah will vanish from them.

[60] Dīwān Hāfiz, Ghazal 417.

[61] Risālah al-Liqā' Allāh by Maliki Tabrīzī, p. 58.
There are many narrations about the complete detachment of the believer towards the Essence of Truth and the lack of attention to any manifestation (even the luminous manifestations of the world of meaning such as the Houris and the Angels). For more information, refer to the hadith of Abu Hamza from Imam Baqir (peace be upon him) in 'Uddat al-dā'ī wa najāḥ al-sā'ī, p. 67 and the hadith Qudsi in Irshād al-Qulūb ilā l- Ṣawāb, by al-Diylamī, vol. 1, p. 203; and the story of the lack of attention of Allamah Tabatabaei (may his soul be sanctified) to the Houris with a cup of heavenly wine in hand, and the annoyance of the heavenly Houri in Mihr-i Tābān, p. 31.

[62] Dīwān Hāfiẓ, Ghazal 202.

[63] Ibid, Ghazal 376:

If love for you, this heart would sever,
And cast it out, a lonely ember,
Where could it find a kindred flame,
To whisper back its whispered name?
No other soul could fit its mold,
A hollow space, a love grown cold.
For you're the sun that warms its core,
The very essence I adore.
This empty shell, once beating true,
Would wander lost, with nothing new.
Without your light, a darkened room,
Love's echo lost, a fading bloom.

[64] Sharh 'Ifānī Ghazalhāy-i Ḥāfiẓ, vol. 2, p. 1407, Ghazal 207:

In swirling thoughts, your love I find,
A constant presence, soft and kind.
Within my heart, your fondness dwells,
A warmth that soothes, a story tells.
Like mother's milk, it nourished deep,
A love that bloomed while I did sleep.
And when this life begins to wane,
With every breath, it will remain.

[65] Dīwān ibn Fāriḍ, p. 184; Rūḥ Mujarrad, p. 344: My love and intoxication from His wine existed before my creation and existence, and it will remain forever, even if my bones decay.

[66] The hadith of " sa'ah (capacity) and gushāyish (expansion)" has been narrated in several ways in the hadith collections.

In Awālī al-La'ālī al-'Azīzah, vol. 1, p. 424, it is narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said:

و قال النبي صلى الله عليه و اله: إن الناس في سعة ما لم يعلموا.

People are in ease as long as they do not know.

In many of the books of the Usulis scholars, the hadith is narrated in two other ways without mentioning its document: One way is to add a tanwīn* to " sa'ah" and make "mā-ما" a Ẓarfiyah Maṣdarīa(a verbal noun that functions as an adverb in a sentence, indicating time, place, or manner). In this case, the meaning of the hadith would be that people are at ease if they do not know their obligations.

The other way is not to add a tanwīn to " sa'ah" and consider the "ما" after it as a Mūṣūlah(a noun that introduces a relative clause) and add it to it. In this case, the meaning of the hadith would be that people are at ease regarding the obligation they do not know.

In Al-Kāfī, vol. 6, p. 297, Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) narrates from Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him and his family) that he said: They are in ease until they know.

هم في سعة حتى يعلموا.

* Tanwin (refers to a special diacritic mark that appears at the end of certain nouns in Arabic grammar).
[67] Quran, 17:15.
[68] To learn that the true meaning of repentance is to move towards the Essence of Truth, please refer to Anwār-i Malakūt, vol. 1, p. 160.
[69] Imam Baqir (peace be upon him) said:

إياكَ و التّسويف، فإنّهُ بحرٌ يغرقُ فيه الهلكى.*

Do not delay in action and put it off until tomorrow, for procrastination is a sea in which many people have perished.

*Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 75, p. 164.

[70] Iḥyā' 'Ulūm, Vol. 4, p. 28, narrated from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace:

إنّ أكثرَ صياحِ أهلِ النّارِ من التّسويف؛ بيشترين فرياد اهل دوزخ، از تسويف است.

The majority of the cries of the people of Hell are from procrastination.
[71] For more information, refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, Vol. 3, p. 24.
[72] In Amal al-āmil, vol. 1, p. 59, he quoted them as follows:

و لقد عجبتُ و ما عجبتُ — لكلِّ ذي عينٍ قريرة
و أمامهُ يومٌ عظيمٌ — فيه تنكشفُ السّريرة
هذا، و لو ذكر ابنُ آدم — ما يُلاقي في الحفيرة
لبكى دمًا من هول ذلك — مُدّة العُمْرِ القصيرة
فاجهدْ لنفسك في الخلاص — فدونهُ سُبُلٌ عسيرة

[73] For more information, refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, Vol. 2, pp. 159-178.

Nahj al-Balāghah (Abduh), Vol. 1, p. 89; Ḥilyat al-Awliyā', Vol. 1, p. 76; Ma'ād Shināsī, Vol. 6, p. 281: Today is the day of action and deeds, not the day of reckoning and accountability, and tomorrow is the day of reckoning and accountability, not the day of action and deeds.

[74] The quotation from Nahj al-Balāghah ('Abdū), vol. 1, p. 89; Hilyat al-Awliyā', vol. 1, p. 76; and Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 6, p. 281 is: Today is the day of action and deeds, not the day of reckoning and accountability; and tomorrow is the day of reckoning and accountability, not the day of action and deeds."
[75] Allāh Shināsī, vol. 1, p. 93: God has created us in the best forms (95:4)* and has deposited all of His beautiful names and lofty attributes within us. He has made our nafs a materia prima (i.e., a pure potentiality for any conceivable actuality on the path of growth and perfection and becoming characterized by His names and attributes). In terms of aptitude and the possibility of progress and development and ascent from the degrees and stages of certainty and attainment of gnosis and oneness and annihilation in His most holy essence and subsistence in His holy attributes, He has created us infinite. That is, just as He is infinite in His essence, names, attributes, and actions, essentially, existentially, and actually, He has made us infinite in terms of potentiality, creation, and aptitude. Therefore, in terms of possibility and aptitude, we can ascend to the highest degrees of His attributes and names, and the possibility of becoming characterized by all of them exists. However, in terms of actuality and the realization of that potentiality and the concentration of that essence, attributes, and actions, it depends on movement and struggle with the nafs (self) and traveling the path and way to God.

لقد خلقنا الإنسان في أحسن تقويم.

*Quran, 95:4: Indeed, We created man in the best of molds.
Imām Shināsī, Vol. 5, p. 83: "Indeed, We have created man in the best of forms.
[76] For more information, refer to Nūr Malakūt Qur'an, Vol. 1, p. 283, commentary.

[77] Tanbīh al-Khawāṭir wa Nuzhat al-Nawāẓir, Vol. 1, p. 269:

و خرجَ رسولُ اللهِ صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم إلى المسجدِ، فإذا قومٌ يتحدّثون و يضحكون، قال: "اُذكُروا الموتَ؛ أمَا و الّذي نفسي بيدِه، لو تعلمون ما أعلمُ لضحكتُم قليلاً و لبكيتُم كثيراً!

The Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, went to the mosque. Suddenly, he saw a group of people talking and laughing. He said to them, "Remember death! By the One in whose hand is my soul, if you knew what I know, you would laugh little and cry much!"
[78] For more information about the characteristics of the world of Mithāl and the Barzakh, refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, Vol. 2, Sessions 11 and 12: "The Distinctions between the Natural World, the Barzakh, and the Resurrection."
[79] Nur Malakūt Qur'ān, Vol. 2, p. 285, commentary 1: This supplication is narrated in Shia and Sunni hadith collections.

1- Shaykh Ṭūsī, in Miṣbāḥ al-Mutabajjid, stone print edition, p. 53, in the section on the supplications after the afternoon prayer, has mentioned the following:

ثمّ تقولُ: اللهمّ إنّي أعوذُ بكَ من نفسٍ لا تشبعُ و من قلبٍ لا يخشعُ و من علمٍ لا ينفعُ و من دُعاءٍ لا يُسمعُ - الدّعاء.

"Then you say: O Allah, I seek refuge in You from a nafs that is not satisfied, and from a heart that does not fear, and from knowledge that does not benefit, and from a supplication that is not heard.

2- Rāghib Isfahānī narrates in Muhādharāt, Vol. 1, p. 35:

قال النبی صلّی الله علیه [و آله] و سلّم: "أشدّ النّاس عذاباً یوم القیامة عالمٌ لا ینتفع بعلمه." و قال علیه السّلام: "أشدّ النّاس ندامة عند الموت العلماء المفرّطون." و قال صلّی الله علیه [و آله] و سلّم: "اللهمّ إنّی أعوذ بک من علمٍ لا ینفع، و قلبٍ لا یخشع، و عینٍ لا تدمع، و نفسٍ لا تشبع؛ و أعوذ بک من شرّ هؤلاء الأربع.

The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: "The most severely punished people on the Day of Judgment will be a scholar who does not benefit from his knowledge." And he said peace upon him: "The most regretful people at the time of death will be the scholars who have been excessive." And he said, may God bless him and grant him peace: "O God, I seek refuge in You from the knowledge that does not benefit, a heart that does not fear, an eye that does not shed tears, and a nafs that is not satisfied; and I seek refuge in You from the evil of these four qualities."

کان رسول الله صلّی الله علیه [و آله] و سلّم یدعو فیقول: "اللهمّ إنّی أعوذ بک من الأربع: من علمٍ لا ینفع، و قلبٍ لا یخشع، و نفسٍ لا تشبع، و دعاءٍ لا یسمع." و در دعای مروی از أنس وارد است که بعد از این عرض میکرد: "اللهمّ إنّی أعوذ بک من هؤلاء الأربع".

Hākim in Mustadrak, Vol. 1, p. 401, narrates three different versions, two with his chain of transmission from Abu Hurayrah and one from Anas, that: "The Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, would supplicate and say: 'O God, I seek refuge in You from four things: from knowledge that does not benefit, a heart that does not fear, a soul that is not satisfied, and a prayer that is not heard.'

In the supplication narrated from Anas, it is added that after this, he would say: 'O God, I seek refuge in You from these four things.'

[80] Nahj al-Balāghah ('Abadū), Vol. 2, p. 185.

[81] For further information on the sciences that should be pursued, refer to Nur-i Malakūt-i Qur'ān, Vol. 2, p. 280.

[82] Munyat al-Murīd, p. 150, Chapter 2:

فی أنّ الغرض من طلب العلم هو العمل.

The purpose of seeking knowledge is action.

[83]Quran, 80:34-42. Verses 37 to 41 are Excerpts from Abu Hamza al-Thumālī supplication.

[84] Al-Fadā'il, p. 154, from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, in the description of the contents written on the gates of heaven and hell: "And I saw that three words were written on the second door of Hell; the first word is:

من أراد أن لا یکون عریاناً یوم القیامة فلیکس الجلود العاریة.

Whoever wants not to be naked on the Day of Judgment should dress the naked and naked bodies of the poor in this world. (Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 10, p. 338)

[85] Warrām collection(Tanbīh al-Khawātir wa Nuzhat al-Nawāzi), Vol. 1, p. 53; Al-Kāfi, Vol. 8, p. 106; Kashf al-ribā, p. 72:

قوله صلّی الله علیه و آله و سلّم: "من کانت لأخیه عنده مظلمة فی عرضٍ أو مالٍ فلیستحلّها منه قبل أن یأتی یومٌ لیس هناک دینارٌ و لا درهمٌ یؤخذ من حسناته، فإن لم تکن له حسناتٌ أخذ من سیّئات صاحبه فیزید علی سیّئاته.

It is narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: 'Whoever has wronged their brother regarding their honor or wealth, they must seek forgiveness from them before the Day comes when there will be no dinar or dirham to be taken from their good deeds. If they have no good deeds, it will be taken from the sins of the wronged person, thereby adding to their sins!'

[86] Kashf al-rība, p. 72:

قوله صلّی الله علیه و آله و سلّم: "کفّارة من اغتبته أن تستغفر له.

The expiation for one who backbites someone is to seek forgiveness for them.

[87] For more information, refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 7, p. 17.

[88] Mathnawī Ma'nawī, book 1: Love that is based on superficiality is not true love, but rather a disgrace.

[89] For further information, refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, vol 4, pp. 307-309.

[90] Mathnawī Ma'nawī, book two.

[91] Quran, 80:37. An excerpt from Abu Hamza al-Thumālī supplication.

[92] Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 68, p. 221; Kanz al-Ummāl , vol. 7, p. 769 (with slight variations):

قال رسول الله صلّی الله علیه و آله و سلّم: "إنّ لربّکم فی أیّام دهرکم نفحاتٌ، فتعرّضوا لها لعلّه أن یصیبکم نفحةٌ منها فلا تشقون بعدها أبداً.

The Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his family) said: 'Verily, your Lord has moments of grace throughout your days. Seek them out, for perhaps you may be touched by one of them, and you will never suffer hardship again.'"

[93] Quran, 14:17.

[94] Quran, 42:23.

[95]

كانتْ لِقلبي أهواءٌ مُفرّقةٌ
فاستجمعتْ، مُذ رآكَ، أهوائي
فصارَ يحسدُني مَن كنتُ أحسدُهُ
و صِرتُ مولى الورى مُذ صِرتَ مولائي
تَرَكتُ للنّاسِ دُنياهم و دينَهُمُ
شُغلاً بذكركَ يا ديني و دُنيائي
ما لامَني فيكَ أحبابي و أعدائي
إلا لغفلتِهم عَن عِظَمِ بلوائي
أشعلتَ في كبدي نارين: واحدةً
بينَ الضّلوعِ و أُخرى بينَ أحشائي.

These five verses are attributed to Hallaj. They are found in Iḥyā" 'Ulūm ad-Dīn (Revival of the Religious Sciences), Volume 5, page 69, and Dīwān al-Ḥallāj (The Collected Poems of Hallaj), page 171. Translation of the Verses:

My heart once held scattered desires,
But when I saw you, my longings united.
He who I once envied now envies me,
And I became the master of humanity when you became my master.
I left the people their world and their religion,
Preoccupied with your remembrance, O my religion and my world.
Neither my lovers nor my enemies love me for anything,
Except for their negligence of the greatness of my affliction.
You have kindled two fires in my chest:
One between my ribs and one in my entrails.

[96] These verses are the words of Sayyid al-Shuhadā, peace be upon him, and its speaker is Ibrāhim Adham. Refer to Allāh Shināsī, vol. 1, p. 124.

[97] Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ, Ghazal. 177:

زیر شمشیر غمش رقص کنان باید رفت
کانکه شد کشته او، نیک‌سرانجام افتاد

Under the sword of his grief, one must dance,
For he who falls victim to it meets a good chance.

[98] Bābā Ṭāhir, Quatrains. 33:

Love's grief, a scorching desert wind,
Has swept my joy and left me thinned.
A flightless bird, I yearn to fly,
But clipped by absence, I can only sigh.
"Be patient," all the voices say,
But patience mocks me day by day.
A handful of dust, their empty plea,
Falls heavy on my misery.

[99] Tadhkirat al-Awliyā', Vol. 2, p. 22.

[100] Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 19; Sharḥ Mathnawī Shahīdī, Vol. 9, p. 546. This story has been attributed to several individuals with different interpretations: A young man who repented in Junayd's assembly took a thousand dinars to bring to Junayd. They said, 'He will not accept it.' He went to the Tigris River, threw the dinars in individually, then came to Junayd. Junayd said, "The step you could take once, you cannot take a thousand times! Go away, for you do not give us joy!' (Tadhkirat al-Awliyā', p. 432); Shibli, who threw four thousand dinars into the Tigris River. (Kashf al-Maḥjūb, p. 287); Abul Husayn Nūrī threw three hundred dinars, the price of a house he had sold, into the water one by one, saying, 'You want to deceive me.' (Translation of Talbīs Iblīs, pp. 248-249)"

[101] Teatise "Lubb al-Lubāb", p. 10:

الكُلُّ عبارةٌ و أنتَ المَعنى   يا مَن هُوَ لِلقُلوبِ مِغناطيسُ!

The whole world of possibility is like a phrase, and you are its meaning, O you who are the magnet of hearts!

[102] Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ, Ghazal. 262:

With mortal coil, I may reside, a fleeting earthly form,
But love's embrace, a boundless tide, transcends the passing storm.
Think not this strange, this endless flame that burns within my soul,

For when we part, that fleeting name, finds not life's finite scroll.

[103] Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid wa silāḥ al-muta'abbid, vol. 2, p. 844, a paragraph from Kumayl's prayer.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-Karīm (Mulla Ṣadrā), vol. 1, p. 358:

إفي الحديث: "مَن أحبَّ كريمتاه لا يكتُبنَّ بالعصر!

According to the hadith: "I love His Grace, but do not write them in the evening"!

[106] Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid wa silāḥ al-muta'abbid, vol. 2, p. 844, a paragraph from Kumayl's prayer.

[107] 'Ilal al-sharāyi', vol. 2, p. 360.

[108]Nahj al-Balāghah ('Abdū), First Sermon, volume 1, page 7:

الحمدُ لِلهِ الَّذي لا يبلُغُ مِدحَتَهُ القائلون، و لا يُحصي نعماءَهُ العادّون، و لا يؤدّي حقَّهُ المُجتهدون، الّذي لا يُدركُهُ بُعدُ الهِمَمِ، و لا ينالُهُ غوصُ الفِطَنِ، الّذي ليسَ لصِفَتِهِ حدٌّ محدودٌ و لا نعتٌ موجودٌ و لا وقتٌ معدودٌ و لا أجلٌ ممدودٌ ...

All praise is due to Allah, whose praise cannot be fully expressed by those who praise Him, whose blessings cannot be counted by those who count, and whose rights cannot be fully fulfilled by those who strive. He is the One whom no high aspiration can reach and no deep thought can attain. He is the One whose attributes have no limit, description, time, or duration... (Imām Shināsī, Vol. 12, Page 347)

[109] Ilāhīyāt Shifā, First Essay, Seventh Chapter, p. 47:

فإذن واجبُ الوجود واحدٌ بالكلّيّة ليس كأنواعٍ تحتَ جنسٍ، و واحدٌ بالعدد ليس كأشخاصٍ تحتَ نوعٍ؛ بل معنى شرح اسمه له فقط و وجوده غير مشترك فيه.

Therefore, the Necessary Being is absolutely One, not like species under a genus, and numerically One, unlike individuals under a species. Rather, the meaning of the explanation of His name is only for Him, and His existence is not shared with others. (Tawḥīd 'ilmī wa 'aynī, p. 211)

His Eminence, our great teacher, Allamah Tabatabaei(may God sanctify him), has proven in his interpretation of the discussion of tawhid (Oneness of God) after narrating a few paragraphs from several sermons) of Amir Al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), and after a historical discussion about the belief in the manner of Oneness and the way to fight against polytheism), trinity, and duality (the trinity of Christianity and the duality of Zoroastrianism): Among all the divine philosophers from ancient Egypt, Greece, and Alexandria until the emergence of Islam, there was no mention of the true and real the absolute Oneness and the pure essence of oneness or "the absolute reality of unity.

What has been narrated from all of them, as well as what has been narrated from those who came after them in Islam and followed the same path of wisdom and philosophy, is the numerical oneness of the essence of God. Even Shaykh al-Rais Abu Ali Sina explicitly states in his book al-Shifa the numerical oneness of the essence of the Exalted God. After him, the philosophers who came until around the year thousand of the Hijri migration all believed in the numerical oneness of God. The scholars of theology and researchers also did not mention anything more than the numerical oneness in their arguments. While all of them brought their proofs and evidence from the Holy Quran, they did not understand anything from this Quran other than the numerical oneness!

This summarizes what the scholars and thinkers have said about the Oneness of God.

[110] For more information, please refer to Tawḥīd 'ilmī wa 'aynī (Objective and intellectual Tawḥīd), pp. 283-284: Explanation and clarification of the nature of Ibn Kammuna's doubt.

[111] Tawḥīd 'ilmī wa 'aynī, p. 284, commentary:

Ayatollah Haj Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Al-Kashf al-Ghita' says in the second edition of his book al-Firdaws al-A'la, pp. 200-201: The doubt raised by Ibn Kammuna was difficult for the pillars of wisdom in his own time, and this difficulty lasted for several centuries, to the point that - as mentioned in the first part of the Asfar - it was referred to as the 'pride of the devils'. We heard from our teachers in the wisdom that the Muhaqqiq Khunsari - the author of Mashariq al-Shams who was nicknamed 'the eleventh intellect' - said: "If His Eminence the Hujjat (may God hasten his reappearance) appears, I will not ask him for a miracle except for the answer to the doubt of Ibn Kammuna."

However, in the eleventh century, when great philosophers such as Sayyid Damad, his student Mulla Sadra, and Mulla Sadra's two students Fayaz and Lahiji (the author of Shawariq, nicknamed Fayyaz) appeared, the matter was reversed. And clear proofs - which have illuminated and brightened the world of Tawhid until today and beyond - were established for the originality of existence, and all essences are 'itibārī (conventional) - in such a way that the mind abstracts them from the limits of existence - and that the unlimited existence, like the wujūd wājib,* does not have an essence; rather, His essence is his existence.**

*wujūd wājib" translates to "necessary existence." It is a theological concept used in Islam to describe the nature of God. In Islamic theology, God is considered the only being with wujūd wājib.

**In Sadra's philosophy, the Necessary Being (wājib al-wujūd), identified with God, is the only being that truly exists. This is because the Necessary Being is independent and self-sufficient, while all other beings are contingent and dependent on something else for their existence.

The Necessary Being's essence (māhiyyah) is identical to its existence (wujūd). This means that the Necessary Being does not have a separate essence distinct from its existence. Rather, its essence is simply the fact that it exists.

This identity of essence and existence distinguishes the Necessary Being from all other beings. Their essence is possible for other beings, and their existence is contingent. But for the Necessary Being, its essence is necessarily existent.

[112] Quran, 11:56; Imām Shināsī, vol. 4, p. 37: "There is no creature but that He holds it by the forelock. Indeed, my Lord is on a straight path."

[113] Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid, Volume 2, Page 846, Excerpt from the Du'a Kumayl.

[114] Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid, vol. 2, p. 593, with slight variations.

ارجو غنى فاقتى

Do not burn me with fire, for You are the source of my hope.

[115] Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid, vol. 2, p. 821. Excerpts from the visitation of the holy shrines in the month of Rajab.

[116] Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid, vol. 2, p. 593:

فلا تحرقنى بالنار و انت موضع املى.

[117] Ibid, vol. 2, p. 592:

لا تخيبنى إذا اشتدت فاقتى و لا تردنى لجهلى و لا تمنعنى لقلة صبرى.

[118] Mathnawī Ma'nawī, Book 4.

[119] Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ, Ghazal 16.

[120] Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ, Ghazal 417.

[121] Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt, p. 147.

[122] Quran, 2:25; Quran, 3:15, 136, 195, 198.

[123] Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid, vol. 2, p. 593: "So who is more deserving of you?

فمن أولى منك.

Iqbāl al-A'māl al-Ḥasanah, vol. 1, p. 169.

[124] Ṣaḥīfah al-Sajjādīyah, p. 60:

اللهم إن تشأ تعف عنا فبفضلك، و إن تشأ تعذبنا فبعدلك، فسهل لنا عفوك بمنك و اجرنا من عذابك.

O God, if You will, You may forgive us by Your grace, and if You will, You may torment us by Your justice. So make Your forgiveness easy for us through Your favor and protect us from Your torment.

[125] Kitāb al-Mazār (by al-Mufīd), p. 161; Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid, vol. 2, p. 696.

[126] Manāqib Al Abī Ṭālib, vol. 1, p. 56; I'lām al-Wará, pp. 53-54; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, pp. 323-349.

[127] Quran, 73:8.

[128] Al-Amālī of Shaykh Ṭūsī, p. 414:

أخبرنا محمد بن محمد، قال أخبرنى أبوحفص عمر بن محمد بن على الصوفى، قال حدثنا أبوعلى محمد بن همام الإسكافى، قال حدثنا جعفر بن محمد بن مالك الفزارى، قال حدثنى سعيد بن عمرو، قال حدثنى الحسن بن ضوء، عن أبىعبدالله (عليه السلام) قال: "قال على بن الحسين زين العابدين (عليهما السلام) قال الله (عزوجل): ما من شىء أترددد فيه مثل ترددى عند قبض روح المؤمن، يكره الموت و أنا أكره مساءته، فإذا حضره أجله الذى لا تأخير فيه بعثنا إليه بريحانتين من الجنة تسمى إحداهما المسخية و الأخرى المنسية، فأما المسخية فتسخيه عن ماله، و أما المنسية فتنسيه أمر الدنيا.

It is narrated that Imam Zayn al-Abidin (peace be upon him) said: God Almighty said: "I did not hesitate in any matter as much as I hesitated in taking the soul of the believer. Because that believer hated death, and I also hated to cause him distress. So when the inevitable time of that believer came, I sent him two fragrant flowers from Paradise, one of which was called مسخيه and the other منسيه. As for مسخيه, it makes him indifferent to his wealth, and he gives up all of it. And as for منسيه, it makes him forget about all the affairs and concerns of the world."

[129] For more information on the topic of "the supplications, lamentations, prayers, and invocations of the pure Imams (peace be upon them) were not artificial and for the guidance and instruction of the servants", see Risālah al-Lubb al-Lubāb, pp. 98-99.

[130] Al-Ja'fariyāt, p. 199:

أخبرنا عبدالله بن محمد، قال أخبرنا محمد بن محمد، قال حدثنى موسى بن إسماعيل، قال حدثنا أبى عن أبيه عن جده جعفر بن محمد عن أبيه عن جده على بن الحسين عن أبيه عن على بن أبىطالب عليه السلام قال: "قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله و سلم: اكثروا من ذكر هادم اللذات؛ فقيل: يا رسول الله و ما هادم اللذات؟ قال: الموت؛ فإن أكيس المؤمنين أكثرهم للموت ذكرا و أحسنهم للموت استعدادا.

Abdullah ibn Muhammad narrated from Muhammad ibn Muhammad, who narrated from Musa ibn Ismail, who narrated from his father, from his grandfather, Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from his grandfather, Ali ibn al-Husayn, from his father, from Ali ibn Abi Talib, upon whom be peace, who said: The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, said: "Remember often the destroyer of pleasures." It was said: "O Messenger of Allah, what is the destroyer of pleasures?" He said: "Death. For the wisest of believers is the one who remembers death the most and prepares for it the best."

[131] Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn, Vol. 4, Part 12, p. 38:

قال صلى الله عليه [و آله] و سلّم: من مات فقد قامت قيامته.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: When a person dies, their resurrection has come.

[132] Quran, 9:24: Commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allāh.

[133] Quran, 23:99-100:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ * لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِن وَرَائِهِم بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ.

Until death comes to one of them, he says, "My Lord, send me back so that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind." No! He is saying only a word, and behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected.

[134] Quran, 23:107-108:

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وُقِفُوا عَلَى النَّارِ فَقَالُوا يَا لَيْتَنَا نُرَدُّ وَلَا نُكَذِّبَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ * بَلْ بَدَا لَهُم مَّا كَانُوا يُخْفُونَ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ.

If you could but see when they are made to stand before the Fire and will say, "Oh, would that we could be returned and not deny the signs of our Lord and be among the believers." But what they concealed before has now appeared to them. And even if they were returned, they would return to what they were forbidden; indeed, they are liars.

[135] Al-Kāfi, vol. 3, p. 338.

[136] In "Sharḥ al-asmā' al-ḥusnā (Lawami' al-Bayyināt)," page 88, it is narrated:

روى أن واحدا سال جعفر الصادق رضى الله عنه عن الاسم الأعظم فقال له: "قم و اشرع فى هذا الحوض و اغتسل حتى أعلمك الاسم الأعظم!" فلما شرع فى الماء و اغتسل ـ و كان الزمان زمان الشتاء و الماء فى غاية البرد ـ فلما أراد أن يخرج من جانب الماء أمر جعفر أصحابه حتى منعوه من الخروج عن الماء، و كلّما أراد أن يخرج ألقوه فى ذلك الماء البارد؛ فتضرّع الرجل إليهم كثيرا فلم يقبلوا قوله، فغلب على ظن ذلك الرّجل أنهم يريدون قتله و إهلاكه؛ فتضرّع إلى الله تعالى فى أن يخلصه منهم، فلما سمعوا منه ذلك الدعاء أخرجوه من الماء و ألبسوه الثياب و تركوه حتّى عادت القوة إليه. ثم قال لجعفر الصادق: "الآن علمنى اسم الله الأعظم!" فقال جعفر: "يا هذا! إنك قد تعلّمت الاسم الأعظم و دعوت الله به و أجابك." فقال: و "كيف ذلك؟!" فقال جعفر: "إنّ كلّ اسم من أسمائه تعالى يكون فى غاية العظمة؛ إلاّ أن الإنسان إذا ذكر اسم الله عند تعلّق قلبه بغير الله لم ينتفع به. و إذا ذكره عند انقطاع طمعه من غير الله كان ذلك الاسم الأعظم. و أنت لمّا غلب على ظنّك أنّا نقتلك لم يبق فى قلبك تعويلٌ إلاّ على فضل الله؛ ففى تلك الحالة أىّ اسم ذكرته فإنّ ذلك الاسم هو الاسم الأعظم."

A man once asked Ja'far al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) about the Greatest Name of God. He replied, 'Get into this pool and bathe, and I will teach you the Greatest Name of God!' When the man got into the water and bathed—during the winter when the water was extremely cold—and tried to get out, Ja'far ordered his companions to prevent him from leaving the water. Every time he tried to get out, they threw him back into the cold water. The man pleaded with them extensively, but they did not heed his pleas. The man then became convinced that they intended to kill him. He implored God to save him from them. When they heard his supplication, they pulled him out of the water, dressed him, and let him rest until his strength returned. Then he said to Ja'far al-Sadiq, 'Now teach me the Greatest Name of God!'

Ja'far replied, 'O man! You have already learned the Greatest Name of God and called upon Him with it, and He answered you.' The man asked, 'How is that?' Ja'far explained, 'Every one of God's names is of the utmost greatness; however, if a person calls upon God's name while his heart is attached to something other than God, he will not benefit from it. But if he calls upon God's name when all hope in anything other than God is cut off, that name becomes the Greatest Name. When you were convinced that we were going to kill you, your heart relied solely on God's grace; in that state, whichever name you invoked was the Greatest Name.'"

[137] Iqbāl al-a'māl, Vol. 2, p. 644, excerpt from the daily supplications for the month of Rajab.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Mathnawī Ma'nawī, Book 3, p. 322.

[140] Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid , vol. 2, p. 583.

[141] Al-Kāfī, Vol. 3, p. 310, Supplications before the Takbiratul Ihram:

عن الحلبي عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: "إذا افتتحت الصلاة فارفع كفيك ثمّ ابسطهما بسطا ثمّ كبّر ثلاث تكبيرات، ثمّ قل اللهمّ أنت الملك الحقّ... والشّرّ ليس إليك.

Al-Halabi narrated from Imam al-Sadiq, upon whom be peace, who said: "When you begin the prayer, raise your hands, then spread them out completely, then say the takbir three times, then say: 'O Allah, You are the true King... and evil does not reach You.'"

142 Sharḥ al-Manẓumah, vol. 3, p. 528.

143 Mathnawī Ma'nawī, Book 5, p. 422.

144 Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid , vol. 2, p. 594.

145 Al-Kāfi, vol. 3, p. 324.

146 Al-Balad al-Amin, p. 211, from the supplication of Abu Hamza Thumali.

147 Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid , vol. 2, p. 590: "إلى مَن يذهب العبدُ إلا إلى مولاه!"

148 al-Tafsīr al-mansūb ilā al-Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī, p. 36:

قال الإمام عليه السّلام ... قال الله تعالى: يا موسى إنّ الفخرَ [العظمة] ردائي و الكبرياء إزاري، من نازعني في شيء منهما عذّبته بناري.

The Imam (upon whom be peace) said: God, The Exalted said: O Moses, pride is My robe and majesty is My garment. Whoever disputes with Me over anything of them, I will torment him in My fire.

149 al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrá, vol. 1, p. 354; Musnad Ahmad, vol. 3, p. 153; Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol. 4, p. 60.

150 Al-Kāfi, vol. 2, p. 663.

151 Al-Kāfi, vol. 3, p. 266; Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī, vol. 2, pp. 99 & 100.

152 Iqbāl al-a'māl, vol. 1, p. 228.

153 Iqbāl al-a'māl, vol. 1, p. 228:

ممّا رَويناه بإسنادنا إلى أبي‌محمّد هارون بن موسى - رضي اللهُ عنه - بإسناده إلى زيد بن علي، قال سمعتُ أبي عليّ بن الحسين عليه السّلام ليلة سبع و عشرين من شهر رمضان يقول من أوّل اللّيلة إلى آخرها: اللهمّ ارزقني التّجافي عن دار الغرور و الإنابة إلى دار الخلود و الاستعداد للموت قبل حلول الفوت.

What we have narrated with our chain of transmission to Abu Muhammad Harun ibn Musa - may Allah be pleased with him - with his chain of transmission to Zayd ibn Ali, who said: I heard my father, Ali ibn al-Husayn, upon whom be peace, on the night of the twenty-seventh of the month of Ramadan, saying from the beginning of the night to the end of it: O Allah, grant me the ability to turn away from the abode of deception and to turn to the abode of eternity, and to prepare for death before the arrival of regret.

154 Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid , vol. 2, p. 654.

155 Al-Mazār al-Kabīr, ibn al-Mashhadī , p. 639.

156 For more information on this topic, see Imām Shināsī , vol. 1, p. 45; Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 2, p. 59 & vol. 4, pp. 214-215; Risālah al-Lubb al-Lubāb, p. 44.

157 For more information, refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 7, pp. 160-162.

158 Risālah Siyr wa Suluk" attributed to Bahr al-'Ulūm, p. 118, commentary. 3.

159 Allāh Shināsī, vol. 2, p. 156.

160 Mathnawī Ma'nawī, Book 3.

هرکجا یوسف‌رخی باشد چو ماه
جنّت است آن، گرچه باشد قعر چاه
با تو دوزخ جنّت است ای جان‌فزا
با تو زندان گلشن است ای دلربا
شد جهنّم با تو رضوان نعیم
بی تو شد ریحان و گل، نار جحیم
هرکجا تو با منی من خوشدلم
ور بود در قعر گوری منزلم
خوشتر از هر دو جهان آنجا بود
که مرا با تو سر و سودا بود

Wherever Yusuf-face dwells, like the moon's radiant glow,
Eden it becomes, even in a well's depths below.
With you, my love, even hell turns into paradise,
With you, my heart's delight, even prison is a garden of surprise.
With you, my love, even hellfire transforms into heavenly delight,
Without you, my love, even roses, and basil turn to infernal plight.
Wherever you are, my love, my heart finds its glee,
Even if my abode were the depths of the grave, it would set my spirit free.
Sweeter than any realm, that place would be,
Where our hearts entwine and our souls decree.

161 Mirṣād al-'Ibād, p. 359; Tawḥīd 'ilmī wa 'aynī, p. 149, commentary. 3: This sentence is the text of a received hadith, but its meaning is found in Sermon 201 of Nahj al-Balāghah: 'Take your hearts out of the world before your bodies leave it.'"

و اخرجوا من الدّنيا قلوبكم قبلَ أن تَخرُجَ منها أبدانُكم.

162 Quran, 10:44.

[163] Quran, 5:119; Quran, 9:100; Quran, 58:22; Quran, 98:8.
[164] Quran, 57:23.
[165] Nahj al-Balāghah (‘Abdū), vol. 4, p. 238:

قال عليه السلام: الزهد كله بين الكلمتين من القرآن قال الله سبحانه: (لكيلا تأسوا على ما فاتكم و لا تفرحوا بما آتاكم) و من لم يأس على الماضي و لم يفرح بالآتي فقد أخذ الزهد بطرفيه.

[166] Majma‘ al-bayān, vol. 8, p. 108.
[167] Quran, 6:151.
[168] Quran, 2:127.
[169] Misbāḥ al-Mutahajjid , vol. 2, pp. 595-597.
[170] Quran, 24:22:

وليعفوا وليصفحوا ألا تحبون أن يغفر الله لكم والله غفور □.

Let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like Allah to forgive you? Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.
[171] Quran, 93:10:

وأما السائل فلا تنهر:

And do not repel the beggar.
[172] Majmu'ah al-Warrām, Vol. 1, pp. 58-59